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Sports Illustrated

'92
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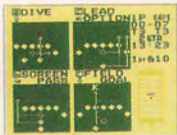
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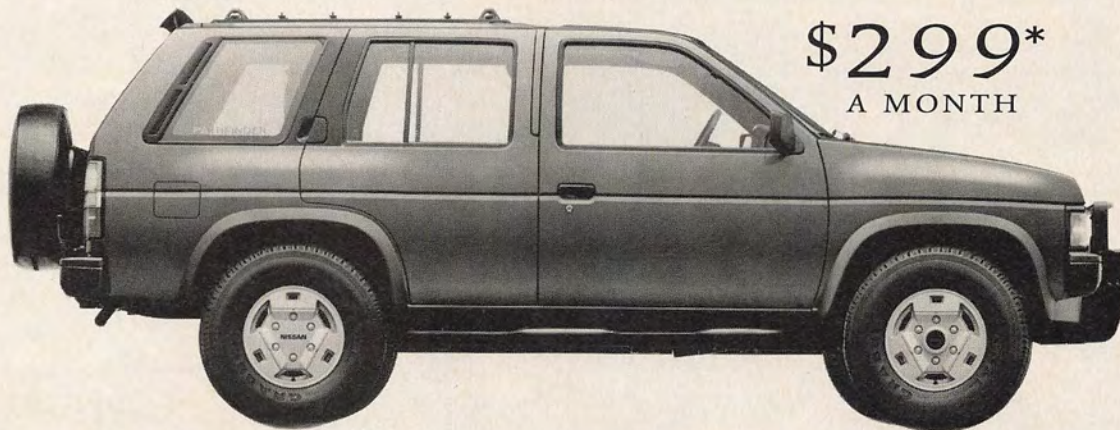
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POINT AFTER

Down and Dirty

Although Saint wide receiver Eric Martin bit the dust on this play, wideouts all over the league are flying high (page 18).

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PHOTOGRAPH BY
PETER READ MILLER

JOHN BIEVER



The Dream Team

It seems sad that during the Olympics, an international competition intended to celebrate amateur athletes, so much attention was focused on the Dream Team, a group of highly paid professionals with inflated egos (*Let the Games Begin*, Aug. 3). The hype and publicity surrounding the team only detracts from the true Olympic heroes, the many previously unheralded champions of sport.

GINA DOMINIANNI
West Paterson, N.J.

With the exception of Magic Johnson, Clyde Drexler and Larry Bird, the U.S. basketball team showed little to no class. I hope we send only collegians to future Olympics.

DAN BRYANT
Chino, Calif.

I grow weary of all this Dream Team bashing. The team's presence in the Olympics was utterly within the rules. Sure, in the U.S. we're all a bit tired of the NBA and its endless season, but the rest of the world isn't sick of the NBA players. Theirs was a beautiful and powerful display of excellence in athletics.

MICHAEL SANDELS
Hollywood

When members of the Dream Team expressed reluctance about giving up their summers and taking attention from other athletes, we practically reconvened the Un-American Activities Committee. Now they're criticized for having hogged the attention. It would have been too expensive for security and too distracting for everybody to have them stay in the Olympic Village, but we complained because they

stayed in an expensive hotel. If they won by too many points, they were rubbing it in. If they didn't win by enough, they were dogging it and not playing defense. I don't know why these talented men and their families bothered with the rest of us.

MARGO E. BROEHL
Wooster, Ohio

Cheers for your *Faces of the Games* in the Aug. 10 issue. While the conceited, money-hungry Dream Team got all the attention, these athletes quietly represented their countries out of the press's spotlight. Thank you for giving them the recognition they deserved.

ZACK MEYERS
Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.

Pablo Morales

Leigh Montville's *Bravo, Pablo* (Aug. 3) is an inspiration and a tribute to any athlete who has persevered. The Nelson Diebels and Melvin Stewarts often draw media attention with their flashy styles, but gold medal swimmer Pablo Morales's quiet grace and dignity speak far more eloquently in support of all that is admirable in athletics. Montville's comparison of Morales to Joe DiMaggio was right on target and a compliment to both men.

REBECCA CAMPBELL
Chattanooga

Trent Dimas

Trent Dimas's gold medal performance on the horizontal bar deserved more than one paragraph (*Amity Beats Enmity*, Aug. 10). You barely praised his accomplishment before belittling it by saying that Shannon Miller was America's gymnastics star. I, too, was thrilled for Miller, but Dimas's performance should not have been treated as a lesser feat. The road he traveled to reach the Olympics was one that many people could never have endured. That his struggle ended with a gold medal must have made the whole experience that much sweeter for him.

JOANNE HORITA
Honolulu



Hwang had far more reason to celebrate in Barcelona than Nam (26) and Sohn had in Berlin.

Korea's Marathoners

I was disappointed that you didn't cover the final and best event of the Olympics, the men's marathon, despite the interesting history of Korean marathoners in the Games. Hwang Young Cho of South Korea won in 2:13:23 to become the first Korean to win the marathon since 1936, when Sohn Kee Chung set an Olympic record of 2:29:19. Because Korea was occupied by Japan in 1936, both Sohn and bronze medalist Nam Sung Yong had to compete on the Japanese team, using Japanese names (which were Kitei Son and Shoryu Nan, respectively), and to have their victory celebrated by the Japanese flag and anthem. Sohn, now 80, was in the stands in Barcelona to see the victorious Hwang enter the stadium all alone, waving and blowing kisses to the crowd.

WON M. HAN
Visalia, Calif.

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SAFARI



Burdines

THE NEW MEN'S FRAGRANCE BY RALPH LAUREN

Brave New Sports World

Computers are wising up and preparing to take a byte out of today's coaches and managers | by STEVE HYMON

NEW YORK CITY, 2010—THE NEW York Yankees announced today they were dismissing the Statman 3x computer as the team's manager and would seek a replacement in the next generation of high-tech artificial-intelligence hardware.

The Yankees' Statman 3x, manufactured by IBM and better known to fans as Wires, spoke at a press conference shortly before being unplugged: "Humans do not have the capacity to second-guess my decisions," said the computer in an unemotional drone. "Obviously, adherence to baseball's statistical standards does not guarantee success in this job."

Sources close to the Yankees said the team had grown increasingly frustrated with Wires's response time. On several occasions umpires had forced a game to continue before Wires could select a pitch. Twice this resulted in disastrous decisions by human personnel.

Returning to reality for a minute, let's hear from Houston Astro relief pitcher Rob Murphy. "I keep track of every pitch I've thrown since 1989," he says. "I download from my personal computer into my Sharp Wizard [a laptop] so I can actually take the computer out to the bullpen with me.

"In 1990, when I was with the Red Sox, I was looking over my Alvin Davis file on the laptop and realized I had never faced him in a key situation. And he had never swung at the first pitch off me. I said to myself, You better watch it, because if you come in, he might be all over that first pitch. So later, I come in with the winning run on third, one out and Davis up. I made sure I threw a good fastball on the

first pitch, which he popped up weakly to left for an out."

Murphy's computer may not be a Wires, but it's a start. And whether we like it or not, technology is not about to stop at sport's doorstep. Artificial intelligence (AI)—computers programmed to behave like humans—is taking a more prominent role in society with each passing day. As Steve Snow, the exhibits engineer at the Computer Museum in Boston,

to help him analyze various situations.

And baseball is just the tip of the iceberg. Take bobsledding. Before heading for France last winter, the U.S. Olympic bobsled team familiarized itself with the run near Albertville by using a computer simulator at UC Davis, assisted by the professor there who developed it. The U.S. table-tennis team prepared for Asian opponents at the Summer Olympics by returning shots from a robot programmed to spin the ball just as the best Asian players do. And then there is Bill Anzele of South Bend, who makes his living by producing software programs for NFL teams. His programs analyze everything from a player's diet to which scouts are best at picking talent at different positions.

"The problem is, with the huge bucks at stake in sports today, there is no way any edge can be ignored," says Joseph Weintraub, a software designer from New York City. "The tools are here. All it takes is the cleverness to use them."

In Damascus, Md., a clever man by the name of David Hillman sits in the spare bedroom of his suburban home, trying to piece together the future. The room is decorated sparingly—a Star Trek poster over here, a set of Star Trek coffee mugs over there, a bookshelf filled with computer books and military manuals. A Murphy's Law poster of what could go wrong with technology hangs on one wall, and on another there are framed pictures of missiles leaving their silos.

Hillman, 36, spent nine years in the Air Force working on missile guidance sys-



puts it, "There's stuff out there that will curl your hair."

Meanwhile scores of players, coaches and front-office types are already turning to computers. Managers such as Tony La Russa of the Oakland A's use computers to assess the competition. Former New York Met manager Davey Johnson frequently kept a computer nearby

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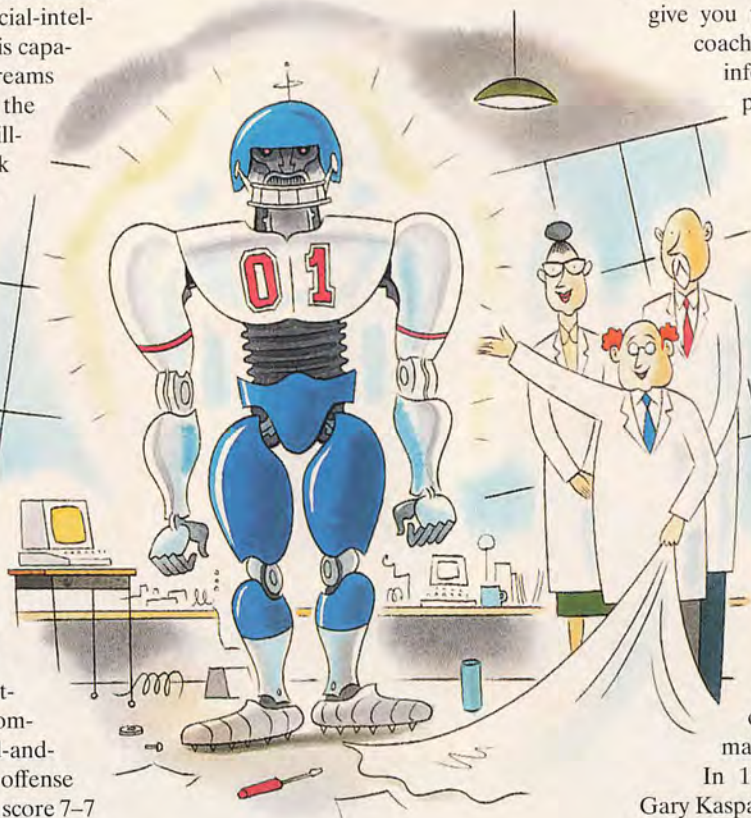
tems, and in 1986 he earned a degree in computer science from the University of Maryland. Hillman's current employment is something of a mystery. When asked where he now works, he replies, "Turn off your tape recorder and put down your pen."

In 1989, while doing work for a "certain" government agency, Hillman was given the task of coming up with a practical application for neural-network technology, a type of artificial-intelligence programming that is capable of processing diverse streams of information. A fan of the Washington Redskins, Hillman decided to mix work with play, so he created a program that thinks like a defensive coordinator. Between plays of a game, the computer operator uses a mouse to input six pieces of data: down, yards to go, field position, score, quarter and time remaining. Then the computer spits out the probability of the next play's being an inside run, an outside run, a short pass, a long pass or, when called for, a punt or a field goal attempt. For instance, the computer's response to a third-and-three situation, with the offense on its own 35-yard line, the score 7-7 and 13 minutes remaining in the second quarter, is a 54% chance the offense will try an inside run, a 22% chance it will throw a short pass, a 12% chance of a long pass and a negligible chance of an outside run.

Initially, Hillman taped and charted three Redskins games from the 1989 season to serve as his data base; then he tested his program by watching several televised 1990 games and comparing the computer's responses with the teams' reactions. The results were good: In 70% to 80% of the plays, the computer correctly predicted what the Skins would do. In one game, the computer hit 95% of the plays. The second time he tried, using three Redskins games from the 1991 season as a data base, Hillman's program nailed 76%

of the Redskin plays in last January's Super Bowl—which is pretty good considering that Washington coach Joe Gibbs is known for coming up with new offensive twists during the playoffs.

"It's still up to the defensive coordinator to make a decision," says Hillman. "But the computer can recommend that during certain situations a certain defense should be used.



"And I feel like I'm just touching on this superficially," says Hillman. "With even more variables, such as field condition, the computer should do even better."

Two questions come to mind. Could Hillman's program be used in the heat of a game? Would it help?

"If a computer was used during a game, it would be most helpful," says Stanford coach Bill Walsh. When asked whether a computer, perhaps a Wires, might one day call the plays, Walsh says hesitantly, "It's so mind-boggling, I wouldn't be able to respond." Then he switches the subject.

"In the very near future, I think what will happen will be communication from

the sideline to the quarterback through a microphone in the quarterback's helmet," he says.

Walsh's response is repeated to Hillman, prompting him to describe another scenario. "If you have a computer with a voice-recognition system of, say, 300 words, you wouldn't have to use the mouse to input the data into the computer," he says. "You could simply tell the computer what the situation is. It would give you the answers, and from the coaches' booth you could relay the information straight to the players on the field through the headphones in their helmets."

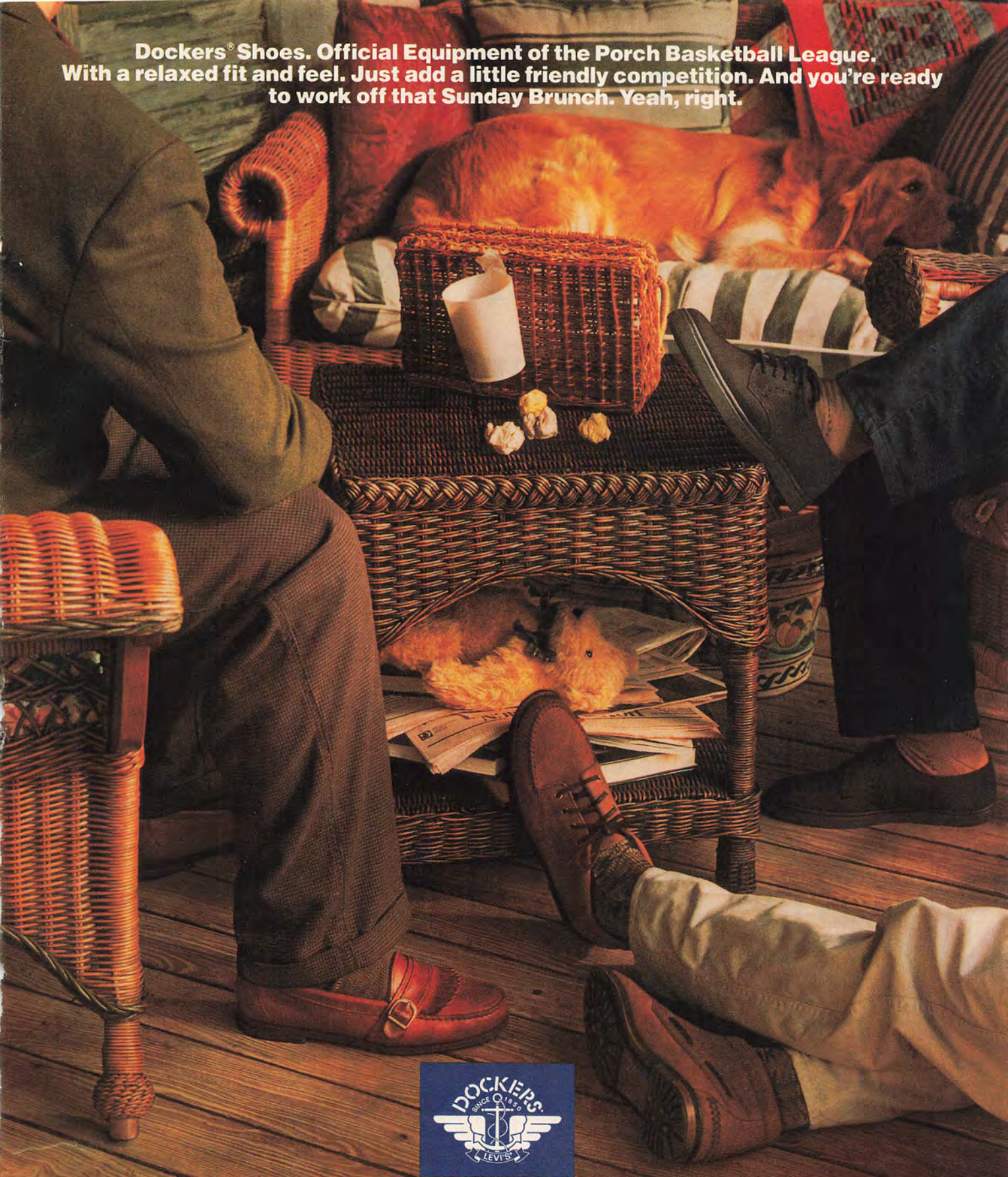
Timeout. Here is the tale of some folks in the computer-science department at Pittsburgh's Carnegie-Mellon University who in the late '80s developed a chess program by the name of Deep Thought. This was not the tabletop chess game that you can find in the computer shop down at the mall. Deep Thought represented some serious circuitry and, in theory, was capable of beating any human opponent.

In 1989 world chess champion Gary Kasparov and Deep Thought went head-to-head in a highly publicized match in New York City. Kasparov kicked Deep Thought back to Pittsburgh, easily winning the match 2-0. Said Kasparov, "I had to challenge Deep Thought to protect the human race. No one would care about chess anymore [if I lost]. Human chess would become second class."

The problem with Deep Thought, said several computer experts, was its programming. While Deep Thought proved capable of analyzing millions of moves in a minute, it was not capable of coming up with an effective long-range plan if a game took an unusual turn, nor was it creative. Kasparov had only to make a few illogical moves to slice through Deep Thought's defense.

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F O C U S

current state of artificial intelligence. Simulating decision making is a very different process from that of actual thinking, which is why most NFL types can't envision a computer ever calling the shots on the field. When asked how a computer could be used in the NFL of the future, George Hoffman, the Cleveland Brown director of computer operations, says, "We are looking at the possibilities of coming up with a video playbook, something where we can give the players real live examples of what the coaches are talking about."

Regardless of their specific applications, data bases in sports will continue to grow, as will their use along football sidelines and in baseball dugouts (currently, on-field computers are banned). One day, no doubt, a computer will be helping Fred Couples select his irons on the Senior tour.

But before all that can happen, the gap between Davey Johnson and Wires will have to be bridged. Hillman's program is fairly accurate, but as Walsh points out, a computer that matches a coach's calls 75% of the time will not necessarily win games in the NFL. Until someone teaches a computer to be creative, to think, to play a hunch—and ultimately, to do better than the coaches—Wires is only science fiction. Or so we thought until we met Robert Epstein.

Epstein is not a sports freak. He has a doctorate in psychology from Harvard, and he is a professor at three universities (San Diego State, Boston University and UMass). He is also the founder and director emeritus of the Cambridge (Mass.) Center for Behavioral Studies. Epstein is a busy guy.

But he agrees to spend some time with a reporter because he is intrigued by the idea of using artificial intelligence in sports. Epstein can relate to Wires; he was a sixth man of sorts for his high school basketball team because during games he could crunch stats on his calculator for the coach, eventually winning a varsity letter for his efforts. These days Epstein spends much of his time "trying to uncover the orderliness of human behavior."

The thrust of Epstein's work is to study human problem-solving skills and creativity and then to simulate those skills in a computer program that can deal with real-life situations—just like Hillman's

program is designed to deal with real football situations.

"I'm after a much bigger fish than decision making," says Epstein. "Look, we understand ourselves now, and our understanding increases daily. We can reflect that understanding better and better in computers through simulating problem-solving skills. And you see, progress will not stop, it will not plateau, it will just keep moving."

Epstein is asked if that means Wires is not just possible, but also feasible. "Let's go further into the future," he says. "There will be computers with access to strategies, computers with access to the huge data bases of the future. Who would you want coaching your team and planning the strategy—Joe Schmoe or Hal 9000? I would rather have Hal 9000, if it was my money at stake.

"This is where people get scared, but it is inevitable. I want people to understand and appreciate that there will be two intelligent species on this earth, Homo sapiens and computers, and we, the Homo sapiens, will integrate them, the computers, into every part of our lives, including sports."

Epstein is talking a mile a minute—he's in a frenzy, he's going where no team has gone before. He has the ball now, guys like Murphy and Hillman and Walsh are blocking, and daylight is ahead.

"Now, let's go even further," Epstein says, catching his breath before plunging ahead. "Robotics."

PASADENA, 2050—Rose Bowl officials finished preparations for Saturday's Universe Bowl I, which will pit the planet's greatest football stars against a team of androids assembled by the world's leading manufacturers of replicants.

The game, which has been in development for the last decade, marks the first time humans and androids will battle head-to-head on the playing field. Androids, in league play between robotics-company teams, have shown sufficient skills and tactical knowledge to be installed as seven-point favorites by Las Vegas oddsmakers.

In a planned pregame tribute that has been plagued by controversy, sponsors have grudgingly agreed to allow 87-year-old Gary Kasparov to conduct the coin toss. Kasparov is famous for his struggles against computers on the chessboard. . . .

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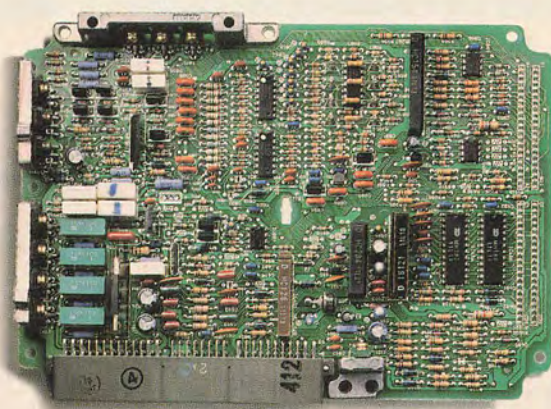
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The Incomplete Angler

At the One-Fly tournament in Jackson Hole, contestants were

allowed to use just a single fly a day | by JUDY MULLER

ONE OF THE REASONS I LOVE TO FLY-fish is the relaxing rhythm of the sport—the total removal, in place and purpose, from the stress and competition of work. So when I was invited to participate in the Jackson Hole (Wyo.) One-Fly contest last September, my first concern was that competing in the sport might nullify its healing powers. My second concern was that I wouldn't be as good as the other contestants. But the official literature for the contest insisted that this would be a different sort of competition: "While some fly fishermen may find the idea of competitive fly fishing repugnant and against what fly fishing is all about, let us point out that this is a friendly competition."

Friendly. I found that reassuring. And I admit I needed all the reassurance I could get; after agreeing to fish on one of the 36 teams in the One-Fly, all my insecurities about my fishing ability came roiling to the surface, like so many trout in a feeding frenzy. The so many trout that over the years had ignored my attempts to "match the hatch" of insects on the water with just the right artificial fly.

But in this event there would be no "matching the hatch." The great equalizer in the One-Fly is exactly that: one fly. Each angler is allowed one fly for each day of the two days of competition; the four anglers on each team do not have to use the same fly, but all 144 contestants face the same daunting problem. Once you have lost that fly, be it a Double Humpy, a Royal Wulff or a Madame X, to any obstacle, be it a tree, a rock or even a

fish, you are out of the competition for the day. You may continue to fish, but the trout you catch won't count on your team's score, which is based on the number and size of the fish you hook.

There is not a fly-fisherman on earth who has not been humbled by a low-hanging branch or a submerged boulder. Depending on the difficulty of retrieval, an angler often chooses to snap off the fly and tie on a new one. In the One-Fly, however, contestants and their official

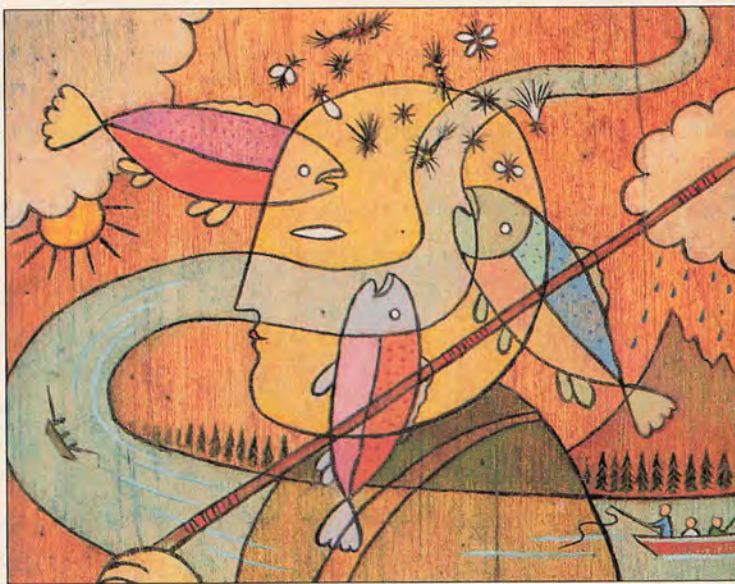
penalty points for the contestant. I bring this up because it is crucial to the moral of our story.

I was invited to participate by the captain of our team, Silvio Calabi, the editor of *Fly Rod and Reel* magazine. He had put together a team of journalists (the Journos), but by the time contest day arrived, two members had dropped out. We filled in the blanks with two fishermen on the alternate list: David Kern, senior vice-president of Zebco Corp., which manu-

factures tackle in Tulsa; and John Garrison, a 36-year-old from Knoxville who introduced himself as a doctor and a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives. At a Jackson Hole restaurant where the team gathered for a get-acquainted dinner, Garrison told me an intriguing story about working undercover for the Drug Enforcement Agency, work that had resulted, he said, in threats against his life. As we were leaving the restaurant, Calabi whispered to me, "I'll bet that there's more to this guy than

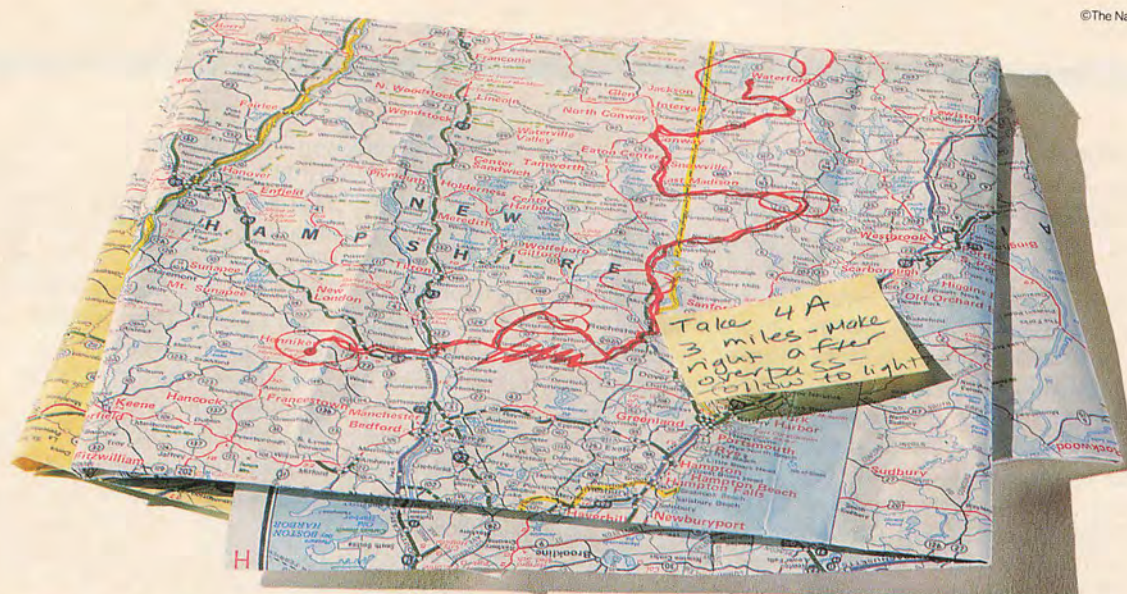
meets the eye." Much more.

I had arrived in Jackson Hole two days before the competition. I first wanted to have a chance to fish for the native cut-throat trout without the pressure of cut-throat competition. And so I had a delightful day fishing on the meandering Snake River, learning the way the trout strike (fast, with no slack allowed in the line) and where they tend to feed (near the banks, naturally, under fly-eating trees). The weather was sunny and mild; the Grand Teton range, a dramatic backdrop. But the weather was about to change dramatically, dropping a curtain



guides will go to great lengths to retrieve that one precious fly. One of my guides, for example, brought along pruning shears and a saw, as well as a snorkel and mask. But more on that later.

The One-Fly is an invitational event put on annually by the One-Fly Foundation in Jackson, and it is designed to promote conservation projects, including catch-and-release fishing. The use of a barbless fly is encouraged, since it does less damage to the fish and speeds up the process of getting the fish back in the water. In the One-Fly any fish deemed mortally wounded by the judges results in



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on those mountains and, for that matter, on the whole Jackson Hole valley.

At the cocktail party on the eve of the contest, weather was one of the main topics of conversation. If it rained, we wondered, would a wet fly, fished underneath the surface, work better than a dry fly fished on top? If it snowed, someone asked, as it had in 1988, would the fish be feeding at all? All around the room the fly question was being discussed in conspiratorial tones by the contestants, who included the governor of Wyoming, Mike Sullivan, and sportscaster Curt Gowdy. There was also some speculation about whether the rain would prevent actress Heather Thomas from fishing in a bathing suit this year (it would).



Scott Sanchez, a local flytier, was working the room, dispensing special-ordered flies from a small box. I was among those waiting to buy. I had ordered a couple of Royal Trudes, a fly that can be fished wet or dry. In a field of contestants that included expert guides from New Zealand and casting champion Joan Wulff, I figured I would need all the help I could get.

I awoke at six the next morning to the sound of rain. Groan. We all met at Nellie's, a local restaurant, for breakfast and pairing up with guides. Each guide was to act as judge (monitoring our flies and measuring our catch) and boatman for two contestants from different teams. We would fish from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a break for lunch, on various assigned stretches of the Snake. Before leaving for our assigned stretch, a local guide said to me, "Don't worry about

which fly you choose. It's not the fly that counts; it's how it's fished." Little did he know he had sent my insecurities rocketing into the stratosphere.

My fishing partner that first day was Terry Collier, a professional fishing guide by trade, who hastened to assure me that he was "just here to have a good time." He did appear to be exceptionally relaxed about the whole thing. As we drove to our put-in point, Collier asked our guide, Bob Lowe, about a fly sitting on his dashboard, gathering dust. "Oh, that's a Letort Hopper with rubber legs," replied Lowe. Collier decided he liked the looks of it and would use it in the competition. After all my angst about which fly to use, this guy picks up an old fly off someone's dash-

board! I concluded that there is probably a lot to this "it's not the fly but how you fish it" business.

As Lowe put the boat in the water, I tied on my trusty Trude with a knot of Gordian proportions. I used a 3X leader, one of the strongest available. No doubt the fish would see it attached to the fly and wouldn't be fooled for an instant, but I was taking no chances on losing my fly before noon. As luck would have it, I started out in the front of the boat (contest rules call for changing places at midday), where I would be the first to cast into good pools. As skill would have it, that didn't make much difference. About 20 feet from our put-in point, I made a cast to the left bank, let the fly float under an overhanging tree and congratulated myself on just the right mix of caution and daring. After picking up my fly to cast for-

ward again, I glanced back to see Collier try the same place with his Hopper. *Bam!* He pulled out a 20-inch cutthroat. Lowe measured it, I took its picture, and Collier released it into the water. At that point I became acutely aware that my hip waders, when I was in a sitting position, did not meet my rain jacket and that my lap was soaking wet. It was 8:35 a.m. This could be a very long day.

But while it was a very wet and very cold day, it never dragged. Only my line did that. As the day wore on, however, my casting improved, and I managed to catch four fish by early afternoon. Because they were nowhere near as big as the four that Collier had caught, my score was nowhere near as high. But it didn't matter. I was pleased to be on the scoreboard at all, so sure had I been that I would lose my fly in the first half hour. Actually, I didn't lose it until 2:30 p.m., and then it was in the most honorable of ways, to a fat 15-inch cutthroat. The fly broke off in his mouth, and he was gone. And so was my anxiety. Free to fish without concern for the score, I began to catch more fish.

Collier's Hopper had by this time lost two of its four rubber legs. Even on its last legs, it was still doing the job for him. But he, too, finally lost his fly to a big fish, and we were both in the same boat, literally and figuratively, for the last couple of hours. It was nice to focus on something other than the relentless casting, for a change. We saw otters, eagles, a male elk bugling for its mate, and an osprey latching on to a trout with its talons and flying off. No catch-and-release fishing for him.

Back at the bar at Nellie's, folks were clearly glad to be out of the rain and wasted no time swapping stories. One poor fellow who kept his fly said he caught nothing but a cold, while another had lost his fly on the third cast of the day. Certain teams began to emerge as the ones to watch. Team Sage (of Sage rods company of Bainbridge Island, Wash.) was reported to have caught a fair number of big fish, as had the Hollywood All-Stars, a team that included the aforementioned actress and her significant other, attorney Skip Brittenham, a member of the U.S. team in the 1989 world fly-fishing championships. Our team had acquitted itself well, thanks to the efforts of team captain Calabi and Garrison.

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That night at the banquet at Teton Pines, most conversations began with "How'd you do?" followed by "Where'd you go?" and "What'd you use?" Since anglers are allowed to change flies on the second day, there was a lot of curiosity about which flies had been most successful the first day. Apparently the Trude was one of them. I decided to stick with it.

Day 2 dawned cold and cloudy, but since it wasn't raining, the optimists at breakfast were saying, "Looks like it might clear up!" But the minute we hit the river, the rain came down in buckets. This time I was prepared. I had borrowed long, warm neoprene waders and was layered in a sweater and two jackets. I looked like a fat chocolate bunny. I didn't care. On this day I was teamed up with Mike Atwell of the Sage team. Our guide was Bob Barlow, a local lad who had come prepared with a backup rod, and a good thing too. I had been having trouble fitting my four-piece rod together properly, and sure enough, it cracked on a cast in the middle of the day.

Atwell used a fly called a Stimulator, which caught an obscene number of fish. About 10 fish to each one of mine, in fact. But I bettered my own score from the day before and even managed to catch a couple of small brown trout. Our assigned beat was the Canyon, a deep ravine with many stretches of raging white water. The fishing was difficult and required rapid, accurate casting to pockets along the bank. One group, deciding to fish from the bank for a while, watched in despair as their raft got loose and took off downstream. We captured the runaway craft and held on until the others could make their way downstream to us. But one of those anglers, Kim Vletas, was none too happy at the timing of the mishap. She had been trying to tempt up a cutthroat she estimated at 25 inches. Chasing after the raft cost her a chance at the fish and about a half hour of fishing time. Vletas, by the way, was fishing on an all-woman team that included Joan Wulff and Pat Opler, whose 24½-inch trout caught in 1989 is the alltime One-Fly rec-

ord. At this competition Vletas racked up an impressive 240 points, despite her disappointment about the one that got away.

I had kept my fly for the entire day and caught a respectable number of fish, including a fat 15-inch cutthroat. And I knew I had conquered the "competition thing" when I had to ask the guide how many fish I had caught. Nine, he said, for a total of 40 points (72 for the two days). Other members of my team covered the whole range of fortune. David Kern lost his fly early in the day but still contributed to the scoreboard for our two-day total.



Calabi brought in 137 points, while Garrison wowed everyone with a total of 345 points. He also believed he might have landed what surely must be the big fish of the contest, a 23-inch cutthroat. He caught it on a fly he had tied himself, a version of a Double Humpy.

At the awards barbecue, tales of valiant fly retrievals abounded. Kathy Ruddick of the Fly Fishing Canada team reportedly swam under her boat, emerging on the other side with rod and fly intact. Another angler reported leaving footprints on the shoulders of his guide after using him as a ladder to reach the uppermost branches of a tree.

The winning team: the Hollywood All-Stars, with Skip Brittenham as "high hook," at 401 points. Heather Thomas racked up a very respectable 131 points.

The other two team members, Art Annecharico and Ken August, weighed in with 193 and 285 points, respectively. We ranked ninth out of 36, mostly due to the efforts of Garrison. As for his big fish, it became something of a cause célèbre. At the awards banquet Jack Dennis, president of the One-Fly contest committee, announced there had been a bit of a glitch with Garrison's catch: It seems the fish was never measured by the guide. When Garrison hooked his 23-incher, he was on the bank far upstream from the guide, who was helping another contestant land

a fish at the time. Fearing that his fish would die before the guide got to him, Garrison held up the fish for the guide to see, then marked the length of the trout on his fly rod and released his catch back into the water. Because "rules are rules," said Dennis, the official record would go to a 22-inch trout caught by someone else. But because catch-and-release and good sportsmanship are what the One-Fly is all about, added Dennis, Garrison would also receive a trophy.

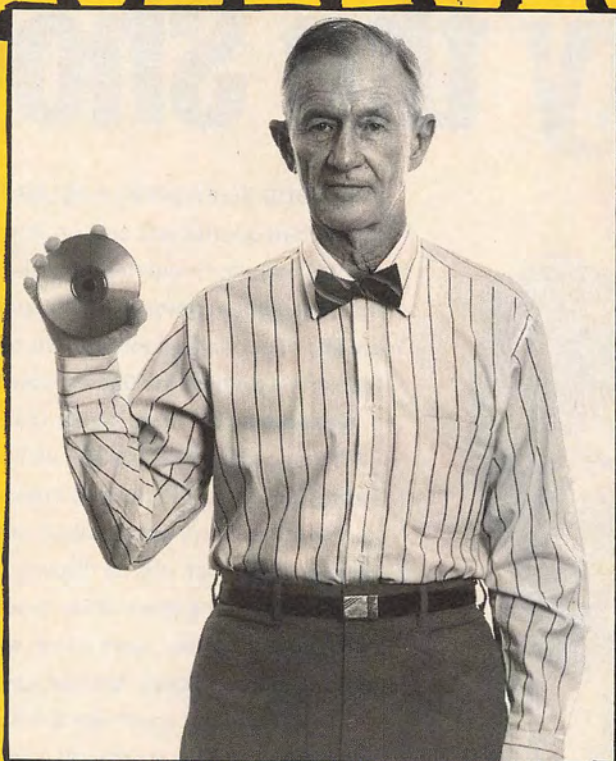
A nice story, right? And that's where I would have ended it, had I not learned more about our mysterious teammate weeks later, after he was arrested on a drunken-driving charge by the Jackson Hole police. They discovered that Garrison was wanted in Knoxville on theft and forgery charges. He was returned to Tennessee, where he pleaded guilty to theft (the other charges were dropped). According to investigators, he was neither a doctor nor a member of the Tennessee legislature, though he had official-looking state plates on his car. Police suspect he was using the One-Fly contest as an entrée to the Jackson Hole social scene and some *really* big fish. We may never know the truth about all the stories he told us. What's unusual about this fish story, in fact, is that the only thing we know for sure is the size of the fish he caught. Then again. . . .

Judy Muller, a TV correspondent for ABC News and a fly-fishing devotee, lives in Los Angeles.

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OLD SPICE ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



Frosty the Showman



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THE WOOD RIVER (NEB.) EAGLES TRAILED ALBION HIGH 26-7 LATE in the third quarter last season. The game would have been out of reach except for a quarterback who says, "I really don't like to lose." In the next eight minutes, 6'3", 205-pound Scott Frost put on an incredible show, scoring on touchdown runs of 50, 45 and 34 yards and blocking a punt as the Eagles won 35-26. Exploits like these make the 17-year-old high school senior the first Old Spice Athlete of the Month.

Frost came by his athletic skills naturally, and sports remain a strong family tie. His parents both starred at the University of Nebraska, his father Larry as a football wingback, and his mother Carol as a national champion discus thrower and 1968 Olympian. Larry is now head coach of the Wood River team, and Carol coaches the receivers. "Around our house," says Scott, whose older brother Steve plays center for Colorado State, "we live, eat and drink football."

The Frosts put sports on Scott's plate early. "I remember Larry taking him out into the front yard when Scott was 9 or 10," says Carol, "and teaching him the crossover step and how to roll out." Following in his mom's footsteps as well, he finished second nationally in the pentathlon as a 12-year-old Junior Olympian.

Frost continues to excel in both football and track. In 1991, he set state records with 3,428 yards total offense (1,964 yards passing and 1,464 yards rushing) and a 105-yard interception return. He also passed for 17 touchdowns and rushed for 19. In the spring, Scott gave a bow to his mother by winning the Nebraska shot put title.

In the classroom he begins his senior year with a 3.8 GPA and No. 3 class rank—all this while helping out on the family farm. No wonder Frost is highly recruited by top-name colleges. And beyond that, he says, he dreams of football's biggest show, the NFL.

The Old Spice Athlete of the Month Award recognizes outstanding amateurs in high school, college club and intramural, recreational and military programs. The November 1, 1993 issue will include a ballot to vote for the Old Spice Athlete of the Year, to be announced in the December 20, 1993 issue. Send your nominations to: Old Spice Athlete of the Month, P.O. Box 2660, New York, N.Y. 10185-0023.

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SCORECARD

Edited by Richard Demak

The NFL's Trials

As the trial of *Freeman McNeil v. The National Football League* resumed this week, things were not looking very good for the league. While the lawyers for McNeil and the seven other player-plaintiffs are arguing that NFL players should have the right to free agency, the owners' lawyers are trying to convince the Minneapolis jury that free agency would do serious economic damage to a league that netted \$330 million over the past two seasons.

The trial's outcome may well hinge on the testimony of two expert witnesses, one for the players, Roger Noll of the Stanford Business School, and one for the owners, George Daly of the University of Iowa's College of Business Administration. Noll was persuasive on the stand three weeks ago, stating that free agency would not harm the league's economic well-being. A week later Daly testified that free agency would spell economic ruin for the NFL.

Toward the end of his scorching cross-examination, players' attorney Jeff Kessler asked Daly if he knew Bill Windauer. Windauer, who played 19 games for four NFL teams in the mid-'70s, has been the director of development for the Iowa business school since 1983. "Yes, of course I know Windauer," said Daly. He had hired Windauer and is now Windauer's boss. "Do you remember telling Mr. Windauer in a conversation in a car on a business trip that free agency would not damage the NFL?" Kessler asked. "I do not," Daly replied, shaking his head, his face reddening. "I never said that."

If the players' lawyers call Windauer to the stand to further discredit Daly, the owners' lawyers would undoubtedly try to undermine his testimony by suggesting that he has an ax to grind. They would point to a lawsuit in which Windauer sued the Miami Dolphins, the last team he played on, for disability benefits. Windauer, along with two other players, lost, but if events in Minneapolis continue to develop the way they have so far, McNeil et al. probably won't.

—LESTER MUNSON



Marino (right) and his teammates handed out food and supplies.

After the Hurricane

Hurricane Andrew ravaged South Florida last week, but though teams were inconvenienced, facilities damaged and coaches' and players' houses destroyed, the sports world was, on the whole, very fortunate.

- The Cleveland Indians' new spring training complex in Homestead—the city hardest hit by the storm—was devastated. Although the Indians, who have trained in Arizona for the past 46 years, still hope to work out in Homestead next spring, it will cost about \$10 million to repair the facility.

The city of Cleveland is chipping in to rebuild Homestead. "Their support has been overwhelming," says Homestead city manager Alex Muxo. "It's as though they consider Homestead their second home."

- The Dolphins, who were scheduled to open their season on Sunday at Joe Robbie Stadium against the New England Patriots, had the game postponed until Oct. 18, when both teams had an open date. The stadium is usable, but it is needed as a base for relief organizations. Its concession machines are producing 35,000 pounds of ice per day for people who have no electricity.

Dolphin linebacker John Offerdahl, who owns three bagel stores in Broward County, worked through the night of Aug. 25 baking bagels to be given to people in Dade County. And quarterback Dan Marino and two dozen other Dolphins spent Sunday delivering goods to storm victims.

able to join the team until last weekend. Freshman defensive lineman Marvin Davis, who is also from Homestead, was unable to locate his mother and two sisters until four days after the storm.

The Fight Goes On

Last week the NHL's board of governors trumpeted what it described as its new policy of getting tough with brawlers. Instead, the governors should have hung their heads in shame. At their meeting on Aug. 25, rather than adopt a tough measure that called for any player involved in a fight to be ejected from the game, the governors settled for a milder rule that calls for any player instigating a fight to be ejected.

Until now a player instigating a fight was subject to a two-minute penalty that was tacked on to a five-minute penalty for brawling. But in only 26% of the 772 fights in the league last season was an instigator identified—usually because officials could not determine who had started the fight. If anything, the NHL's so-called get-tough policy may result in even fewer penalties: With instigators facing ejection, officials may be reluctant to invoke the penalty.



In the NHL, fighting is still in.

They Said It

Yogi Berra, after Milwaukee Brewer manager Phil Garner told him that he had said a Yogi-ism: "What's a Yogi-ism?"

MARINO: BILL FRANKS; FIGHT: DAVID E. KLUTHO

Reeling And Dealing

And lots of stealing. It all added up to another precarious pennant race for the Toronto Blue Jays, who landed

David Cone but failed to slow their rivals | by HANK HERSCH

DID THE TORONTO BLUE JAYS buy it? Can the Baltimore Orioles seize it? Might the Milwaukee Brewers swipe it? Or will all three contenders continue to dance around the American League East crown as if it were a Mexican hat?

The Blue Jays, possessors of first place since June 20, made their best pass at snatching the title last Thursday, when they sent two prospects to the New York Mets for righthanded ace David Cone in one of the season's most shocking trades. But the deal failed to send an immediate seismic shiver through the division. On Friday night at Toronto's SkyDome, Milwaukee historically and hysterically shelacked the Jays 22-2, and the following day the Brewers ran rampant with eight stolen bases en route to spoiling Cone's debut with a 7-2 win. Toronto responded with a 5-3 win on Sunday to keep the Brewers 4½ games back, but the O's lurched to within 1½ games of first, and the Jays found themselves in a familiar struggle to find their late-season stride.

Both of Toronto's rivals politely concede that the Blue Jays are the team to

beat. Baltimore general manager Roland Hemond, whose club won four of six last week, put a strangely positive—or positively strange—spin on the Cone coup. "It indicates they felt compelled to make a trade to try to stay ahead of us, which is a credit to our club," Hemond said.

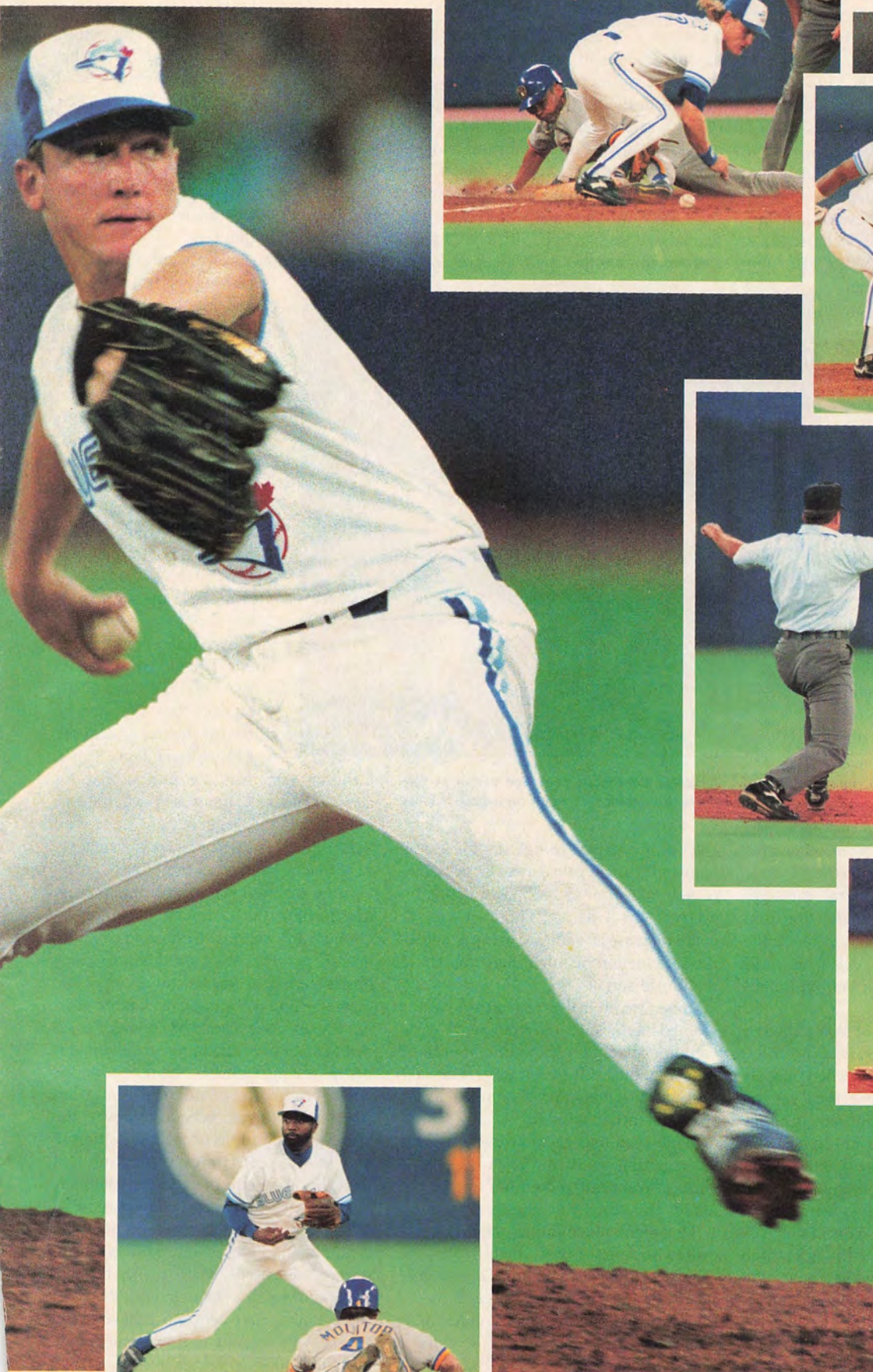
Milwaukee outfielder Darryl Hamilton had a similar take. "The pressure is on the Blue Jays because they have the resources, because they made the trade," Hamilton said. "When you think about Milwaukee, you think about beer. But we've got guys who have big hearts."

The hearts of Toronto fans customarily climb up their tracheae this time of summer. The Blue Jays have won the American League East two of the last three years but have made an adventure of a number of pennant races, earning the ignominious nickname of the Blow Jays. Anxiety is doubly high in Toronto this season, given the team's high expectations (anything less than a first-ever World Series appearance will be a disappointment) and its uncharacteristically high ERA (4.22, third worst in the league at week's end). Jack Morris, who was 17-5 through Sunday, and Juan Guzman, 12-3,

Sports Illustrated

SEPTEMBER 7, 1992

JOHN IACONO; INSETS (FROM TOP): CHUCK SOLOMON (31), JOHN IACONO, CHUCK SOLOMON



The scoop on Cone's inauspicious first outing: seven hits, seven walks, seven runs and a barrage of stolen bases by the Brewers.

have been outstanding, but the the rest of the starters have gone 26-38.

Hence the deal for the 29-year-old Cone, the National League strikeout leader and by general consensus one of the top five pitchers in baseball. Like a limo driver, Toronto general manager Pat Gillick is particularly adept at making stretch pickups. During previous pennant drives he has acquired pitchers Mike Flanagan (1987), Bud Black ('90), John Candelaria ('90) and Tom Candiotti ('91), as well as outfielders Mookie Wilson ('89), Candy Maldonado ('91) and Dave Parker ('91).

None of those acquisitions, however, compares with the Cone deal. "We needed something like this," said Toronto outfielder Joe Carter the day of the trade. "We've been coming to the ballpark on an even keel for a while. Now there's a feeling like, Wow, let's go. It's like Christmastime again."

And just how did Toronto's division rivals allow Cone to clear waivers and fall into Gillick's hands? While it's not true that the major leagues' waiver rules are scrawled on scraps of parchment and can be comprehended only by a battery of Franciscan monks, they are hideously complicated. Even some front-office pros have been baffled by them. (See former Chicago White Sox general manager Larry Himes, who came under fire from fans in 1990 when he failed to block the division-leading Oakland A's from picking up Willie McGee and Harold Baines for the pennant drive.)

The brief explanation of how a pitcher of Cone's caliber could be dealt after the July 31 trading deadline, when players must clear waivers before they can be traded, is that he and hundreds of other players went through waivers en masse in early August. At the time, Cone's inclusion on the waiver wire seemed of little import—after all, the Mets were still in contention—so no team, Toronto included, claimed him. But over the next three weeks the Jays' arms went kaput, the Mets hit the skids, and Gillick shrewdly wheeled for a deal with New York.

He had young talent to offer (neither infielder Jeff Kent nor outfielder Ryan

Thompson—presumed to be the player to be named later in the Cone trade—was sure to be protected in the upcoming expansion draft) and the money to spend (Cone's salary, on a prorated basis, will come to nearly \$1 million for the remainder of the season). Even if Cone, a free agent at year's end, doesn't sign with the Jays, they will be compensated by the team that does sign him, with a No. 1 pick, and possibly another high selection, in the

began charting the game but stopped in the fifth. "He probably had to ice his wrist," said Toronto starter Jimmy Key.

Milwaukee righthander Cal Eldred kept trying to convince himself that he was in a 0-0 game. "I know that sounds wild, but that's what they tell us to do," he said afterward. "My teachers always told me I didn't have much imagination. I showed tonight that I do."

Although the Brewers entered the series having lost three straight games in New York, they sent the Jays' ERA from ninth to 12th in the league with Friday's eruption. The Brew Crew, the American League's most larcenous team, then set a club record with those eight steals—a not-so-surprising development, considering that Cone has allowed more stolen bases than any other pitcher in baseball this season.

Cone gave up seven runs in 6½ innings on seven hits and seven walks before being lifted. The defeat left him with a 3-4 record and a 5.07 ERA since July 17, when he threw 166 pitches against the San Francisco Giants. Cone,

however, dismisses the notion that his arm is weary. "This wasn't what I was looking for, but I'll get better," he said on Saturday. "I started to press when we were having trouble scoring runs."

Cone received a warm reception from the Toronto fans—though those paying homage by wearing Coneheads had to doff them once play started because they obstructed sight lines—and so did Guzman on Sunday. Coming back after missing four starts because of shoulder soreness, Guzman pitched four strong innings before leaving with a 4-1 lead.

Of the three contenders, Toronto has the least difficult schedule down the stretch, followed, in order, by Baltimore and Milwaukee. However, the order of pressure is exactly the reverse. Blue Jay manager Cito Gaston, in particular, seems to be feeling the heat, often taking refuge behind closed doors to avoid reporters' questions. With Cone, though, the Blue Jays like their chances. "One of these days," says Toronto reliever Tom Henke, "we're going to trick some people and win it all."



Canadian Coneheads convened hastily at Sky-Dome to welcome their newly rented ace to town.

1993 draft. "If you're fighting for a pennant and you can get a guy of Cone's ability, you take your chances with eating his salary," says Gillick. "There's a chance you'll increase attendance in the course of the season, and he might help you get to the World Series."

Cone arrived in Toronto on Friday and seemed happy to be a rent-an-ace. He was certainly glad to escape the moribund Met clubhouse. "It's been like a renewal," he said. "In a matter of 48 hours I feel like I've been turned around."

Wide-eyed and eager to please, Cone sat counting to 10 during a TV sound check. "Want me to do it in French?" he asked. "*Un, deux, trois, quatre. . .*"

That night, his counting—*en français* or otherwise—was taxed mightily by the numbers Milwaukee put up: 22 runs on 31 hits to tie the 91-year-old modern record for most hits by a team in a nine-inning game. The Brewers' number 8, 9 and 1 batters went a combined 16 for 21. Cone

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Child's Play

A team from the Philippines manhandled Long Beach to win the Little League World Series | by MERRELL NODEN

POW! BIFF! THWACK! BOOM! Zamboanga! As batsmen go, the Little Leaguers from Zamboanga City in the Philippines are an explosive bunch. Last Saturday afternoon in Williamsport, Pa., in front of a crowd of 40,000 that included a former Little League second baseman by the name of Dan Quayle, the Filipinos knocked out 13 hits to beat Long Beach, Calif., 15-4 and win the 46th Little League World Series. "I hope we never

have to face a better team," said Long Beach coach Jeff Burroughs, the 1974 American League MVP.

This summer's world series was different from the previous 45 in several respects. First, Little League officials switched from a single-elimination tournament to a round-robin format in which all eight teams played three games to determine which four would advance to the semifinals. Second, in order to squeeze in the extra games, the world series included night games for the first time. Finally, and

oddest of all, there was no team from Taiwan.

Since first winning the series in 1969, the Taiwanese had been an overpowering presence, winning 15 of 23 Little League titles. But this summer the Far East was represented by Zamboanga City, the first Filipino team to play in the series. No one knew much about the Filipinos except that in the Far East regional in Guangdong, China, in July, they had scraped together five runs in the top of the sixth to beat Taiwan 6-5.

The Filipinos did not look all that impressive in the round-robin, losing to the Dominican Republic 8-1. The role of the heavy clearly belonged to the Dominican team, representing Latin America. In their three round-robin games the Dominicans batted around seven times, had a *team* batting average of .556 and outscored their hapless opponents 61-1. "They looked like they had monster pitching, monster hitting," said Long Beach's manager Larry Lewis. "They looked unbeatable."

The jubilant Filipinos celebrated their championship and promised trip to Disneyland.

Zamboanga City carried a burden of heavy expectation. "At Barcelona the Philippines won only one medal, a bronze," said manager Rudy Lugay. "This team is important to our people."

Filipino-Americans came from as far away as Chicago and Washington, D.C., to cheer the team on. Last Thursday morning Zamboanga City received a fax from Filipino president Fidel Ramos. "Know that I and your countrymen will all be praying for your victory," he told the team. Gulp! And if that weren't pressure enough, Lilia Clemente, a Filipino businesswoman in New York City, promised the players a trip to Disneyland if they won the tournament.

Lugay went with his ace, 12-year-old lefty Roberto Placious, in the semifinal on Thursday afternoon. He pitched five perfect innings, while his teammates backed him with four runs. He even homered in the sixth. The Dominicans scored once in the bottom of the sixth, and Zamboanga City won 5-1. "Let's call it a major upset," said Lugay with a shrug. "They are very strong."

The other Thursday semifinal pitted Hamilton Square, N.J., against Long

Beach. The Californians and their fans came armed with kazoos, good-luck trolls and pitcher-shortstop Sean Burroughs, son of Jeff. At 5' 4", 130 pounds, Sean, who hit 35 homers in 50 games this season, is a miniature version of his father. "He's a pretty well-rounded kid," says his father. "And he's goofy, like all 11-year-olds."

Sean and Hamilton Square's Andy Famosa matched each other, scoreless inning for scoreless inning. With one out in the top of the sixth, Long Beach shortstop-pitcher Ryan Beaver caught a fastball and sliced it high toward the rightfield foul pole. "Please stay fair," he begged. It did—by about a foot—and Long Beach hung on to win 1-0.

On Saturday, Zamboanga City jumped on Ryan early and often and led 7-0 after an inning. When the game ended, the Filipinos tossed their gloves in the air, then gathered in front of their dugout. Standing shoulder to shoulder on the third base line, they doffed their caps and bowed to their cheering fans. "This is a matter of

national pride," said one of the Filipino fans.

Roberto Placious and his teammates may not see it in quite those grandiose terms. On Saturday night, between mouthfuls of rice cakes and spicy chicken and papaya, Roberto posed for photos with beaming Filipino businessmen. He looked a little sheepish, but playing the part of a celebrity is a small price to pay. After all, he's going to Disneyland. ■



The final turned Sean (right) and his teammates into pictures of frustration.





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'92 | nfl preview

Catch the Rising Stars

*Bursting onto the NFL stage
in unprecedented numbers,
talent-rich wide receivers
are stealing the show*

BY PETER KING



The unheralded Martin had this pass nailed.



Michael Irvin had the video control in his hand, so he could stop the game tape whenever he wanted to. He didn't want to. Not now, not this tape, not this game. Up there on the big screen in a meeting room at the Dallas Cowboys' practice facility, the Cowboys were beating the Washington Redskins, and Irvin was beating Darrell Green, the Skins' five-time Pro Bowl cornerback. Nine catches, 130 yards. That's a beating. It happened at RFK Stadium last November, when Dallas up-



■ *Irvin humbled Green when Dallas dealt Washington its first 1991 defeat.*

ended Washington 24-21 to hand the Redskins their first loss in 12 games and Irvin surpassed the 1,000-yard mark in receptions with four games left in the regular season.

On the screen, Irvin ran a deep curl, Troy Aikman threw the ball, Green recovered, Irvin boxed him out, Irvin caught the pass, Green leveled him—plus 17 yards. Irvin ran a slant, Green stayed all over him, Irvin made the catch—good for 13. “Look at how great Darrell plays this,” said Irvin. “He plays it perfect. I’ve got to box him out to catch this ball. He’s the best.”

But on it went: a pop over the middle for nine, a curl for 11, two catches that went for 20 and 44 yards were called back on penalties at the line of scrimmage, and, then, at the start of the fourth quarter, the clincher, a deep slant, with the ball thrown behind Irvin at the Washington four. He reached back, snagged it and spun around Green, who was left grasping at air. Touchdown. Game, Dallas. “I am certainly humbled,” Green said when it was over.

Lots of cornerbacks, marvelous and marginal, are humbled weekly in today's NFL. “This is the golden age of wide receivers in pro football,” says former San Diego Charger quarterback Dan Fouts, who is now a CBS analyst.

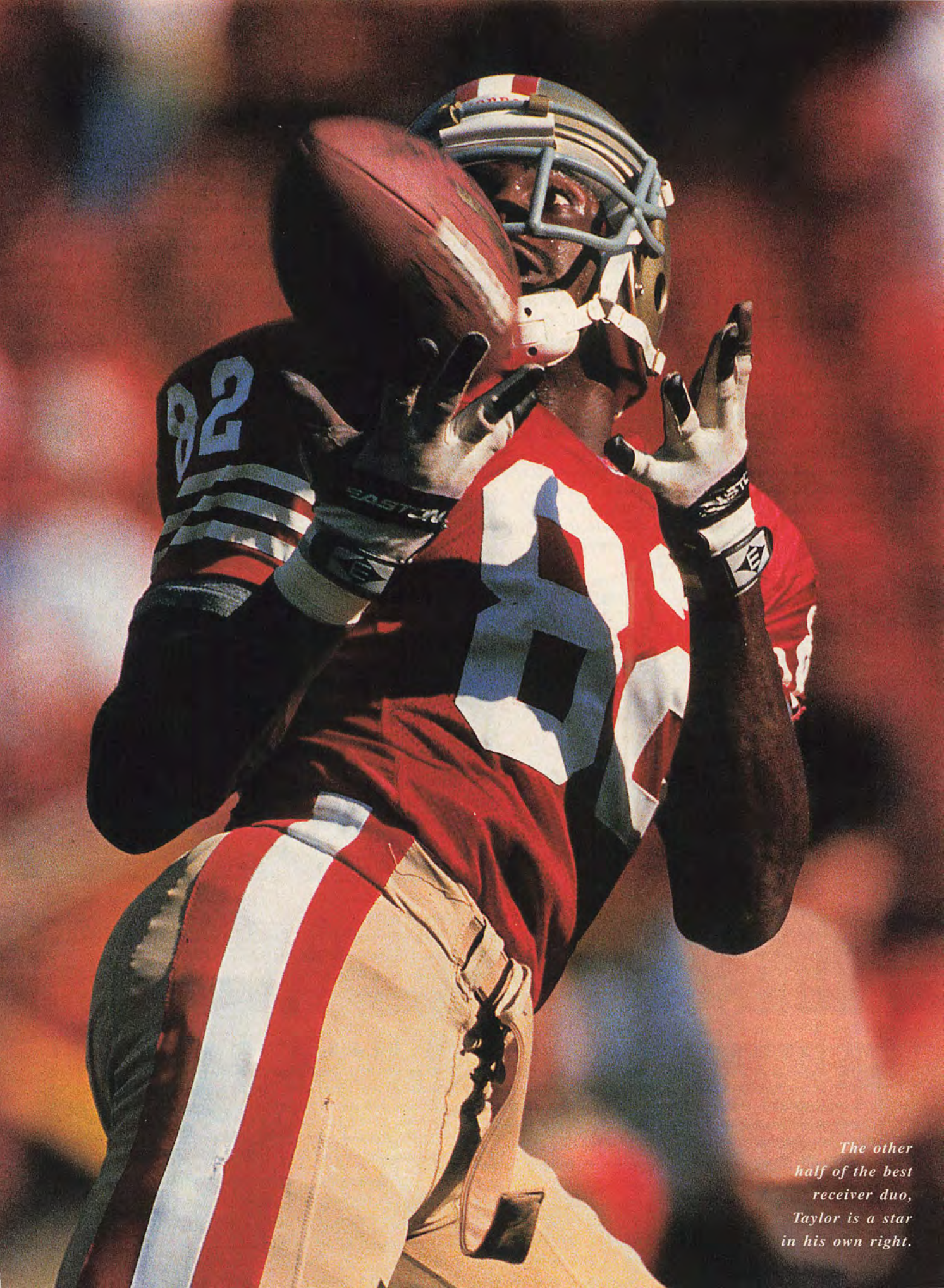
The wide receivers are so talented and so plentiful. The rules are so favorable to them. The defenses are so keyed to stopping the run. So many multisport athletes who play wideout are choosing football for their careers. And the colleges are so factorylike in churning out wide-receiver prospects, while all-purpose tight ends have become nearly obsolete. The result is that wide receivers are thriving in the NFL as never before in the league's 73-year history.

In 1981 wideouts accounted for 42.2% of all completions; by '91 the figure had shot up to 58.1%. In 1986 nine of the top 20 pass catchers in the NFL were either running backs or tight ends; in '91 zero backs and one tight end, Marv Cook of the New England Patriots, cracked the top 20. Sixteen wide receivers caught at least 70 passes last year; before then, no more than 12 had grabbed that many in any

one season. The Skins' second-leading receiver, wideout Gary Clark, and the Houston Oilers' third-leading pass catcher, wideout Ernest Givins, both caught 70 passes; so did each of the Miami Dolphins' bookend wideouts, Mark Duper and Mark Clayton. When Clark was the third-leading receiver on his team in 1989, he had 79 catches.

In 1971 Kansas City Chief wideout Elmo Wright ranked 35th in the league with 26 receptions. In 1991 the 35th-ranked receiver, ageless James Lofton of the Buffalo Bills, finished with 57 catches. The advent of the run-and-shoot and similar high-octane passing attacks favored by the Oilers, Detroit Lions and Atlanta Falcons, among others, is inflating the receiving figures to some degree. But even the teams that traditionally—and successfully—have scattered the ball among all their

ANTHONY NESTLE



*The other
half of the best
receiver duo,
Taylor is a star
in his own right.*

pass catchers are concentrating more on their wideouts. Three years ago, for instance, 44.8% of the San Francisco 49ers' completed passes went to their wide receivers and 41.3% went to their backs. Last year 53% of Niner completions were to wideouts, while 31% were to backs. San Francisco fullback Tom Rathman had 73 catches in 1989, but only 34 in '91. Quite simply, there is a new way of playing offensive football.

And there are new players to play it. Rob Moore of the New York Jets (70 receptions last year) is 23 years old. Atlanta's Andre Rison (81) is 25. Irvin (an NFC-high 93) and the Minnesota Vikings' Cris Carter (72) are 26. Haywood Jeffries of the Oilers hauled in 100 passes to lead the league last year. He's 27.

Only three of today's most accomplished receivers—Lofton, 36; Drew Hill, 35, who caught 90 passes last season for the Oilers and now is with the Falcons; and Washington's Art Monk, 34, whose 71 receptions in '91 left him only 18 shy of the league's record of 819 career catches—are nearing the end of their careers. However, both Atlanta and Washington have terrific young players preparing to take over starring roles. Michael Haynes of the Falcons, who played trumpet in high school instead of football, is only 26, but he led the NFL last season in yards per catch (22.4). And the Redskins traded up to the No. 4 pick in this year's draft to get Michigan's Desmond Howard, whose acrobatic receptions won him the Heisman Trophy last fall.

We haven't even mentioned San Francisco's Jerry Rice yet, which gives you some idea of the depth at the

position nowadays. Rice, 29, who probably would be voted into the Hall of Fame on the first ballot even if he never played another down, is likely to break the alltime record for touchdown grabs—he needs eight to exceed Steve Largent's mark of 100—by November, no matter if Joe Montana, Steve Young, Steve Bono or Sonny Bono is his quarterback.

Although Montana missed all last season because he was recovering from elbow surgery, Rice still had 80 receptions and caught a league-high 14 TD passes. But then Rice has been startlingly productive for a decade, beginning with his three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons (1982 through '84) at Mississippi Valley State, where he played in Division I-AA obscurity. Then one Saturday in October 1984, San Francisco coach Bill Walsh flipped on the TV to watch college football, saw Rice on the highlights and took notice. "The hands, the body, the speed," Walsh recalls. "What an absolutely majestic football player."

Most scouts wrote off Rice because his achievements came mostly against overmatched competition. Walsh, however, drafted him in the first round in 1985. As Rice enters his eighth season, he is universally regarded as the best wideout in the

Catch These Numbers

The rise of the wideout as a dominant player over the past few years is borne out by these three charts.

IT'S A WIDE, WIDE, WIDE WORLD

Here's an illustration of the depth that exists at wideout today. It's a comparison between the league's most prolific No. 3 wide receivers—that is, those who ranked third at the position in catches on their teams—in each of the last four years, and the NFL's leading pass receivers 20 years earlier.

LEADING NO. 3 WIDEOUTS

YEAR	PLAYER, TEAM	CATCHES
1988	Gary Clark, Redskins	59
1989	Gary Clark, Redskins	79
1990	Ernest Givins, Oilers	72
1991	Ernest Givins, Oilers	70

LEADING RECEIVERS 20 YEARS EARLIER

YEAR	PLAYER, TEAM	CATCHES
1968	Clifton McNeil, 49ers	71
1969	Dan Abramowicz, Saints	73
1970	Dick Gordon, Bears	71
1971	Fred Biletnikoff, Raiders	61

■ For Givins, ranking third on the Oilers still is quite a feat.



A LARGER PIECE OF THE PIE

The evolution of wide receiver as a dominant position in the NFL was gradual between 1976 and '86, but what followed was a quantum leap into prominence in the last five years. Here's a percentage breakdown, by position, of total NFL receptions at five-year intervals leading up to last season.

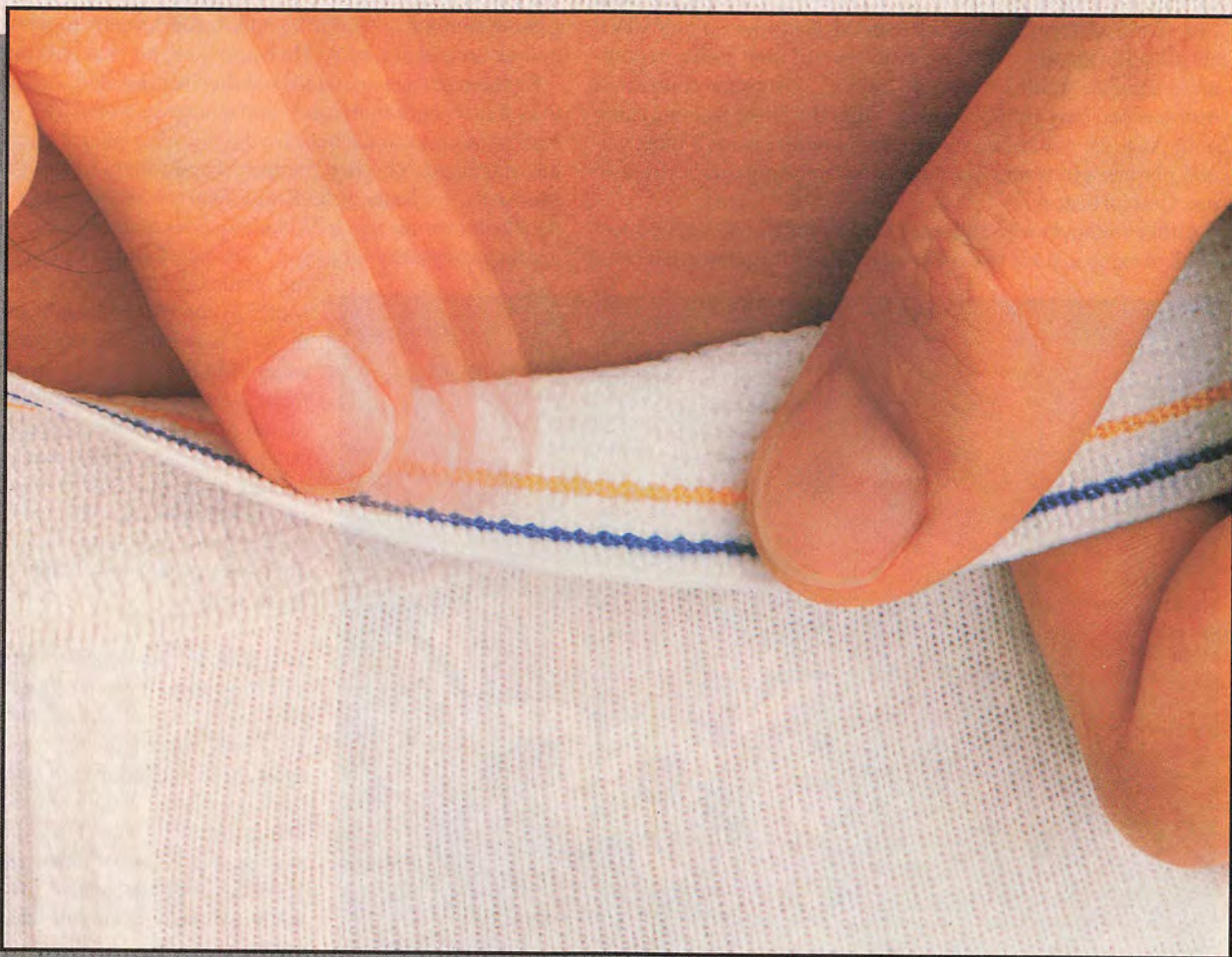
POSITION	1976	1981	1986	1991
Wide receiver	40.7	42.2	45.6	58.1
Running back	42.4	40.0	35.7	28.3
Tight end	16.7	17.5	18.5	13.5
Other	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1

A DEGREE IN RECEIVING

Occasionally a situation in the NFL is the result of a trend that starts on the college level. That was the case when the pros were flooded with quality pass receivers in the last five years. Passing on the NCAA Division I-A level increased dramatically, by 21.5%, between 1980 and '90. Here are the average rushing and passing statistics per major college game in those two years.

	RUSHING ATT.	RUSHING YARDS	PASSING ATT.	PASSING YARDS
1980	95.3	356.6	46.6	303.7
1990	86.1	335.3	56.6	394.8
CHANGE	-9.2	-21.3	+10.0	+91.1

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game. "They call Michael Jordan, Jesus in tennis shoes," says Irvin. "Jerry Rice is Jesus in cleats."

The deification of Rice became complete in January 1989, when he tied a Super Bowl record with 11 catches against the Cincinnati Bengals and broke the mark for receiving yards, with 215. That performance, which earned Rice the game's MVP award, put wideouts over the top in terms of their ability to dominate a game. And his new \$7.8 million, three-year contract, a deal reached only after he held out from the Niners training camp until Aug. 25, confirmed his place among the game's most valued players. He is now the highest-salaried nonquarterback in pro football history.

Other wideouts who followed Rice's lead in passing up most or all of camp in a bid to cash in on their newfound worth includ-

fronts, with linebackers and safeties clogging the line. They rush guys, like [Lion nosetackle] Jerry Ball, who are as strong as an ox. You've got to have help blocking them. If you don't take care of these things, you're going to get your quarterback killed.

"You've got all these things happening around the ball," said Irvin in summary, "and if the quarterback wants to pass, he has to look upfield in a hurry. He has to go to his wideouts more."

So the receivers are good, and they're critical to the success of the offense. Nice marriage—and a necessary one. The receivers have to be exceptional because the overall quality at quarterback has stagnated. The five premier signal-callers in the game are Montana, Jim Kelly, John Elway, Warren Moon and Dan Marino. Their average age is 33, and none is younger than 30. Where are the promising young ones? Aikman, Randall Cunningham of

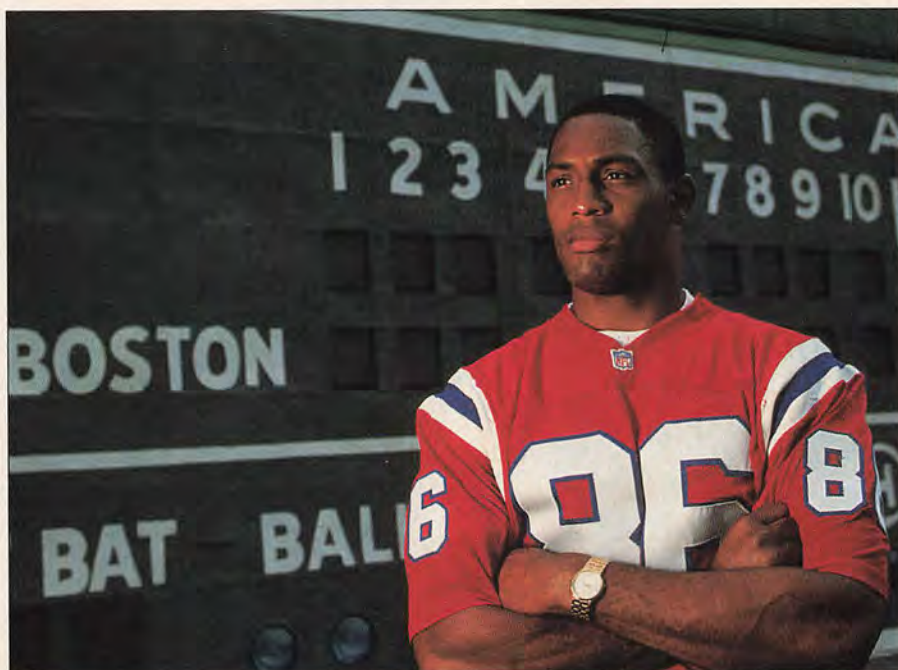
the Philadelphia Eagles and Chris Miller of the Falcons might represent the next generation of superior signal-callers, but they all have histories of injuries, and they have a combined total of one playoff win in 15 seasons. That outstanding new quarterbacks aren't coming along and that so many teams are continually on the lookout for even a good one make today's wideouts seem all the more skilled at catching the ball.

This shift to the Receivers Game began 15 years ago when offenses in the NFL went into an alltime snooze. In 1977 only two of the 28 teams averaged three touchdowns a game. The leading passer, Roger Staubach of Dallas, threw for only 2,620 yards. The average score for a Falcon game was 13-9. So after the season the owners made two significant rule changes to unchain offenses: 1) Linemen would be allowed to use their hands to fend off onrushing defenders. 2) Defensive players would be able to bump receivers only within five yards of the line of scrimmage. "The rule changes," says Tampa Bay Buccaneer defensive coordinator Floyd Peters, "brought the little guys back into football. There was a

■ *The possibility of playing in Fenway Park wasn't enough to lure McMurtry away from football.*

place for the little guy because, except at the line, he couldn't get beat up anymore. For the secondary, the game became like basketball on grass. Quickness became everything."

Wide receivers benefited immediately. And coaches who had the personnel to take advantage of the liberalized blocking and coverage rules—Walsh, Chuck Noll of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Tom Flores of the Los Angeles Raiders—built passing games that became the centerpieces of championship offenses. Before long, defensive coaches devised alignments to counter these wide-open attacks. Chicago Bear coordinator Buddy Ryan drew up the 46 defense, the object of which was to pummel quarterbacks with a lightning-quick rush. College teams saw this, and they started moving big, quick players like Cornelius Bennett and Mike Croel to outside linebacker and defensive end so that



ed Irvin, Rison, Curtis Duncan of the Oilers, Brian Blades of the Seattle Seahawks and Webster Slaughter of the Cleveland Browns. But back in June, when he was replaying the Redskin game tape, Irvin set aside thoughts of his earning potential and instead delivered a poignant reaction to one of the best games of his life. By nature a quote machine when he's around the press, Irvin has been known to boast about his talents. But he'd been watching himself on tape for 90 minutes, and the bragging had given way to a nuts-and-bolts commentary.

"It's tough to cover any wideout now," Irvin said, as he looked at his image freeze-framed on the screen. "I'm not fast by any means, but I know where I'm going, and I know how to use my body, and Darrell has to adjust to me. If the ball's thrown well, and I'm on anybody in single coverage, I'm going to catch it. So will most receivers.

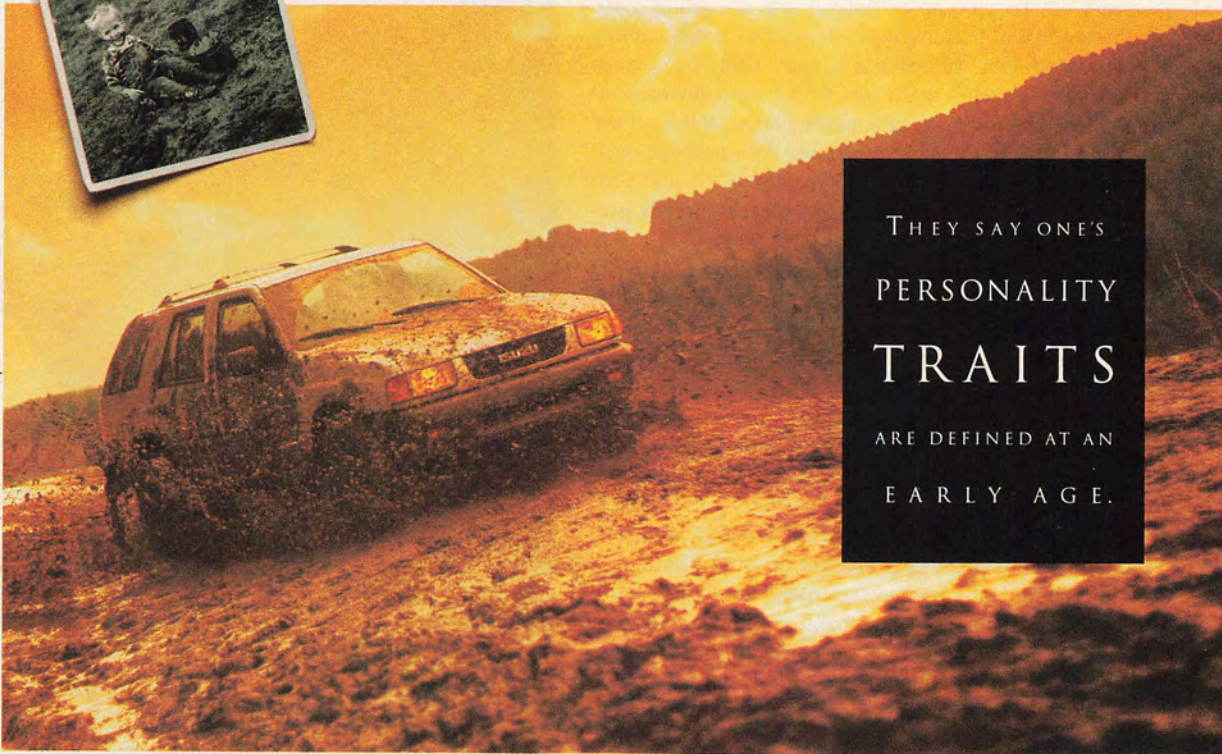
"But we're getting more passes now. Every team's got that one serious, serious pass-rushing linebacker, and most offenses are using their tight end to try to help the line block him. And the running backs who used to catch a lot of passes have to stay in on third down to keep up with the blitzes and the stunts. Most times they don't even get to run routes out of the backfield. Teams are loading up to stop the run, too. They're using these eight-man

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*Mike Shine proudly displaying his
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these players could chase the new breed of mobile quarterback. Soon, NFL teams were seeking budding Lawrence Taylors to turn loose on quarterbacks.

At the same time, college teams were cultivating outstanding wide receivers—in part because football was attracting more premier athletes, in part because the college game was becoming more pass-oriented. College coaches began visiting pro teams. Two of Tennessee's coaches made annual trips to Cincinnati to learn the Bengals' offense and implemented large chunks of the Cincy passing game into the Vols' playbook. By using high draft picks on Tennessee wideouts Tim McGee (in 1985) and Carl Pickens (in '92), the Bengals acquired two players already prepared to play in their system.

The wide-open, pro-style offenses filtered down even into the high schools in the mid-'80s. One of the cradles of football, hallowed Massillon High in Ohio, where Paul Brown coached, switched to a cross between the run-and-shoot and the wing T called the run-and-boot, in which a mobile quarterback throws out of a variety of three-wideout formations.

When run-and-shoot guru Mouse Davis, now coach of the New York/New Jersey Knights in the World League, conducted a coaches' clinic at Giants Stadium this winter, more than 250 coaches overstuffed a meeting room, and Davis had to turn some away. One high school coach flew his staff up from Florida. "It used to be the run-and-shoot wasn't acceptable football to traditionalists," Davis says. "Now it's not chaos, not hodgepodge; it's a rational approach to a winning offense. Coaches everywhere can see that the game is becoming more wide-receiver-oriented rather than a slug-mouth game. Wide receivers give you more production than big backs."

Says Jet general manager Dick Steinberg, "For the last 10 years, year in and year out, wide receiver has been the deepest position in the draft."

Multisport standouts, like Minnesota's Carter and New England's Greg McMurtry, contributed to that depth by choosing to concentrate on football when they came out of high school. Basketball coaches Denny Crum of Louisville, Bill Frieder of Michigan and Gene Keady of Purdue went hard after Carter, a shooting guard whose primary athletic interest, one might have thought at the time, surely was basketball. After all, three of his older brothers had played college basketball—one, Butch, went on to a seven-year career in the NBA—and Cris's heroes were Magic Johnson, Mark Aguirre and Isiah Thomas. But, no, he chose Ohio State and football. "The USFL was still playing when I had to make my choice," says Cris, who was a two-time all-state football player in high school. "I just thought there were so many more jobs in football, and I thought to be a great football player would be easier than being a great basketball player."

The decision was tougher for McMurtry, who grew up playing football and baseball in the Boston suburb of Brockton. As a high school senior in 1985, he scored 15 of his 22 touchdowns on pass receptions and was an All-America selection. Bo Schembechler of Michigan, Joe Paterno of Penn State and Hayden Fry of Iowa headed a parade of football coaches through the McMurtrys' living room. Greg signed with Michigan. But when he hit .424, with six home runs the next spring, baseball scouts told him he had a chance to be a first-round pick in the

■ *If you've seen one Jet wideout—Toon (88), Moore or Burkett—you've seen them all.*

JOHN IACONO





June 1986 draft. The hometown Red Sox, especially, seemed interested, but, recalls McMurtry, "I wanted to play football. I loved the excitement and constant activity. I liked baseball, but there are so many lulls in the action."

Still, a week before the draft, some scouts asked McMurtry if he would consider a baseball offer if one came his way. McMurtry said he would listen to any proposal, but he wanted the scouts to know that he was committed to Michigan and that he wasn't saying that just to raise the stakes in baseball negotiations. The Red Sox ignored his warning and drafted him in the first round. "I was shocked," McMurtry says. "I couldn't believe they did it after what I told them."

However, Boston general manager Lou Gorman says he couldn't resist because he saw a future outfield of McMurtry, Mike Greenwell and Ellis Burks. And the Red Sox made what for them was an unprecedented offer of a \$172,500 signing bonus to McMurtry. The quick money and thoughts of Fenway Park fame tempted McMurtry but didn't change his mind. He went on to Michigan, where he finished with 2,163 receiving

yards (the second-best total in school history) and dropped baseball after his junior year. Then he was selected by the Patriots in the third round of the 1990 draft.

At 6' 2" and 207 pounds, McMurtry runs the 40 in 4.55 seconds. His size is good, his speed is average, and at 25, his football future is on the upswing. He caught 41 passes last year, becoming a starter when Hart Lee Dykes was injured. With Dykes sidelined again because of an injury, McMurtry will start in Sunday's season opener along with Irving Fryar.

"I have no regrets," says McMurtry, who has a bachelor's degree in general studies. "It's easy to say I could be in the big leagues today, starting for the Red Sox, but I could be out of baseball, too. Now I have an education, and I'm playing a sport I like, where I know wide receivers are a big part of the offense. To move the ball consistently in today's football, you've got to have quality receivers."

The quality throughout the NFL today is unprecedented. "When I came into the league, it seems that every team had one guy," says Jet quarterback Ken O'Brien, who made his debut in

White Guys Can't Run

THE TAUNTS START EARLY FOR PHOENIX Cardinal wide receiver Ricky Proehl on most fall Sundays. "Hey, slow white boy!" opposing cornerbacks scream at him. "You ain't going anywhere today. You ain't catching nothing!"

Proehl thinks the Philadelphia Eagle defensive backs are the loudest, but they aren't alone in singling him out—Proehl's one of only five white wide receivers who were starters for most or all of last season. "Most cornerbacks take it personally when they get beat by a white guy," Proehl says. "Even in practice, when I beat a corner deep, I get compliments. It's like I'm not supposed to do it."

Proehl says he feels a kinship with actor Woody Harrelson, because the message the league is sending to young white receivers these days is "White men can't run," at least not fast enough to play in today's offensive schemes. White wideouts led the NFL in receptions in 1951, '61, '71 and '81. In 1991 the leading white receivers—Proehl and Tom Waddle of the Chicago Bears, each with 55 receptions—tied for 38th. What's more, in 1981 four of the top 14 wideouts were white. Ten years later, only five of the first 68 were white.

Proehl, Waddle, Don Beebe of the Buffalo Bills, Michael Young of the Denver Broncos and Robb Thomas of the Kansas City Chiefs entered the '92 preseason as the only white players among the 60 or so

first-string wideouts in the league, but third-year man Proehl was the only one of the five secure in the knowledge he would be a starter this year.

After having been cut three times in 1989 and '90 by Chicago, Waddle became a regular last year only after Ron Morris and Anthony Morgan were injured early in the season; Waddle won a starting job in camp this year. Beebe got plenty of work in 1991, including seven starts before breaking his collarbone, because the Bills used a three-receiver set. But his playing time will be cut if Buffalo sticks to its plan to use a two-back attack regularly this season. Young was a free-agent pickup by Denver last year, and he stepped into a starter's role when Vance Johnson was sidelined most of the season with a knee injury. Young had back surgery in the spring and will not open the season on the Broncos' active roster. Thomas, who started the Chiefs' first 12 games in '91 before spraining his ankle, was unable to win

back his job in training camp this year.

"You don't get the white receiver running 4.5 in the 40," says Miami Dolphin receiver coach Larry Seiple. "Twenty years ago, when it was less of a speed game, you could use Howard Twilley, who ran 4.7. Today you need speed guys, and obviously the black guys are faster."

"It's not racial," says Buffalo general manager Bill Polian. "It's socioeconomic. For the first time this year, I saw black wide receivers running 4.7 at the scouting



■ Proehl is one of two white wide receivers certain to start.

1984. "We had Wesley Walker, and he was really reliable, a big-play guy. Then we had Lam Jones, who was a threat, but wasn't very reliable. And then we had a bunch of other guys. Now, we've got Al Toon and Rob Moore, who are great players; Chris Burkett, who's really underrated; and a quick darter, Terance Mathis, who's got a chance to be great. Our depth is unbelievable."

It's easy to pick the premier wideout tandems. A poll of coaches, scouts and executives produced near unanimous results:

- *The best one-two combination.* Rice and John Taylor of the 49ers, in a walk. "Rice is in a world of his own, a freak of the game," says Lion assistant Dave Levy. "I'm not convinced that on some teams Taylor wouldn't be the better player," says former Niner scouting director Tony Razzano, who had a hand in drafting them both. A fearless blocker, Taylor has helped spring Rice on a few of his long scores. Even when Rice had his MVP game in Super Bowl XXIII, it was Taylor who caught the winning TD pass from Montana with 34 seconds to play.

- *The best trio.* Monk, Clark and Ricky Sanders of the Redskins. This one is a tough call, because Buffalo has developed a formi-

dable threesome in Lofton, Andre Reed and Don Beebe. But the Washington guys are considered the toughest threesome in the league, while also being among the most explosive. Often the Skins use two tight ends to help protect the quarterback, which means Monk and Clark are double-covered on a lot of plays, but they still get open. Together, the three wideouts have averaged 209 catches a season in the last four years.

- *The best foursome.* When the Oilers lost Hill and Tony Jones to the Falcons via Plan B in the off-season, the distinction of having the best group of four receivers went with them. Atlanta already had so much depth that Hill probably wouldn't have started for his new team, but with Rison's holdout lasting into the first week of the season, Hill probably will join Mike Pritchard (50 catches as a rookie in '91) as the starting slot receivers in the four-wide-out Red Gun formation, with Jones and Haynes on the outside. Meanwhile, in Houston, the Oilers can still hit you with Jeffries, Givins, Duncan and Leonard Harris. Not bad.

The Jets might have the most intriguing corps of receivers in the NFL. Defending New York on nickel downs is like trying to

combine. It doesn't matter if they're black or white. It's whether they run all the time and develop their skills, or whether they're playing golf and getting mommy to drive them to the mall."

The preference for blacks is not restricted to the NFL. "When I was in high school trying to get a college scholarship, most of the college coaches would shy away when they found out I was white," says Proehl. And according to New York Jet assistant coach Kippy Brown, when he

was a Tennessee assistant in 1990, the other Volunteer coaches "looked at me like I was nuts" when they found out he was recruiting a white receiver. That player, Craig Faulkner, is a starter for Tennessee this fall.

Nineteen years ago Brown became the first black quarterback in Memphis State history, and he equates the blacks-can't-play-quarterback controversy of years past to the white receivers' situation of today. "The myth about black quarterbacks has been exploded, and it's been proven you have to make decisions based on ability, not skin color," Brown says. "But the mentality of a lot of people in this business is that the white kids can't play certain positions."

The overwhelming need for speed at receiver and cornerback can be traced to NFL rule changes enacted in 1978. Offensive linemen were allowed to use their hands to thwart onrushing defenders, and defensive backs were restricted to bumping wideouts in an area within five yards of the line of scrimmage. All of a sudden, the quick, small black wideout became a huge factor, and an adjustment had to be made on the other side of the ball. At the end of last season the

THE VANISHING BREED

Now that speed has become as valuable an asset for a pass catcher as a pair of good hands, the great white wideout has gone the way of the spotted owl. Here's where the top five white wideouts ranked among all NFL wide receivers in 1971, '81 and '91.

1971	RANK, PLAYER, TEAM	CATCHES
	1. Fred Biletnikoff, Raiders	61
	3. Randy Vataha, Patriots	51
	8. George Farmer, Bears	46
	10. Bob Grim, Vikings	45
	15. Gary Garrison, Chargers	42
1981	RANK, PLAYER, TEAM	CATCHES
	1. Dwight Clark, 49ers	85
	2. Steve Largent, Seahawks	75
	7. Cris Collinsworth, Bengals	67
	8. Pat Tilley, Cardinals	66
	14. Steve Watson, Broncos	60
1991	RANK, PLAYER, TEAM	CATCHES
	30. Ricky Proehl, Cardinals	55
	30. Tom Waddle, Bears	55
	46. Michael Young, Broncos	44
	61. Don Beebe, Bills	32
	67. Brian Brennan, Browns	31

NFL had only six whites who were starting at defensive back—and none of them were cornerbacks.

Proehl sums up the situation best: "Now I can understand how a black guy feels when he walks into a bar and everyone stares at him because he's the only black guy in the place." —P.K.



RIK STEWART/ALLSPORT USA

stop a frontcourt of Hakeem Olajuwon, Patrick Ewing and David Robinson. In their three-receiver sets, the Jets can send out 6' 3", 205-pound Moore, 6' 4", 205-pound Toon and 6' 4", 200-pound Burkett, or they can Smurf you with 5' 10", 170-pound Mathis. It's like watching *Three Men and a Baby*. "Being so big," Moore says, "we don't fit the norm, and teams don't know how to play us. If Al and I are in the game, we can go over people or

take a beating at the line and still get loose to make a catch."

When Burkett came into the league, as a second-round draft pick by the Bills in 1985, "the question was, Could a 6' 4", 200-pound receiver really play?" he says. "The state of the art at the time was Miami, with Clayton and Duper [both 5' 9"]. Now the whole issue is who has the talented downfield people, regardless of size. To win now, with teams so balanced and so even, you

Tight Ends on the Line

AS A 6' 2", 220-POUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR in Birmingham 10 years ago, Cornelius Bennett was everything the University of Alabama was looking for to maintain its tradition of outstanding tight ends. With 4.4 speed in the 40, Bennett had bulled for 1,099 rushing yards from the fullback position, caught 12 touchdown passes when he lined up at tight end, played linebacker and end on defense—and then signed with the Crimson Tide. But Alabama coach Ray Perkins had visions of Lawrence Taylor dancing in his head, and when Bennett reported for his first day of practice at Tuscaloosa he was switched from tight end to outside linebacker.

And that's where Bennett has played to this day, making All-Pro three times in five years with the Buffalo Bills. But even now Bennett thinks of what might have been. He believes he still could play tight end in the NFL. "If I changed today—and I'd love to—I could do it," Bennett says. "It's something I've done all my life, be physical and catch the ball. What's so hard about that?"

Bennett's story is an example of why

the NFL tight end has gone from being a multipurpose weapon of the 1960s, '70s and '80s—a real star—to being treated like a third tackle, the stepchild of the offensive line, in the '90s. Offensive coordinators have gone so far as to diagram tight ends right out of game plans, what with the growing popularity of four-wideout formations and the evolution of the fullback-tight end hybrid position known as the H-back.

In 1986 tight end Todd Christensen of the Los Angeles Raiders led the NFL in receptions with 95, and four other tight ends were among the league's top 30 pass catchers. In 1991 only one tight end, Marv Cook of the New England Patriots, with 82 receptions, either ranked in the top 30 or caught 60 passes.

"At the peak of my career, I was a threat on every down," says Ozzie Newsome, the former Cleveland Brown who retired after the 1990 season with more catches (662) than any other tight end in NFL history. "But toward the end of my career a tight end was lucky to be in for 60 percent of the snaps in a game."

So why did the tight end vanish so quickly from the pro landscape? "Two things," says New York Jet coach Bruce Coslet. "The colleges aren't producing them anymore, and the prototype NFL all-around tight end—strong, big, mobile—is playing power forward in the NBA. You give me Charles Barkley or Karl Malone, and I'll make a tight end out of him."

Buffalo's Keith McKeller is one of a handful of promising tight ends in the league today, but he,

too, had NBA ambitions. McKeller played forward for four years while at Jacksonville (Ala.) State, and he had a tryout with the Atlanta Hawks in 1986. When the Hawks didn't sign him, McKeller took the advice of some NFL scouts. He returned to Jacksonville State, from which he hadn't yet graduated, played one season of football at tight end and became the Bills' ninth-round pick in the 1987 draft.

As was the case 10 years ago with Bennett, the decline of the tight end has its roots on the college level. While the average number of passes thrown in an NCAA Division I-A game was climbing from 46.6 in 1980 to 56.6 in '90, coaches looked for new ways to disrupt the more wide-open attacks. One solution was to switch quick, agile tight-end prospects to outside linebacker.

Today the all-around tight end is virtually obsolete. The Washington Redskins use 6' 4", 245-pound Don Warren almost exclusively as a third tackle; he has caught 54 passes in the last five seasons. Cook and Jay Novacek of the Dallas Cowboys are terrific pass catchers who usually line up in the slot as third wideouts. The San Francisco 49ers' Brent Jones, the Pittsburgh Steelers' Eric Green and the Vikings' Steve Jordan are the best all-around tight ends, but Green had the only 100-yard receiving day among them last season.

It's going to be up to newcomers like Derek Brown of Notre Dame and Johnny Mitchell of Nebraska, this year's first-round draft picks of the New York Giants and Jets, respectively, to prove there's still a place in the game for the classic tight end—the player who can block a defensive end, make a catch against a strong safety and stiff-arm a linebacker. A dubious NFL watches. "I don't think there will ever be a classic tight end again," says San Diego player personnel director Billy Devaney. "The position really is extinct."—P.K.

■ In '86, when tight ends thrived, Christensen had 95 grabs.



FOCUS ON SPORTS

need one or two big strikes a game. There are so many different kinds of receivers who can give you those big strikes."

Even career underachievers such as Fryar have been swept along by this wave of success in the wide-receiver ranks. The last wideout to be chosen No. 1 in the draft—the Patriots made him the first pick in 1984—Fryar had a career year in '91 with 68 catches for 1,014 yards. But not everyone has broken clear of the morass of talented pass catchers. A player as good as Eric Martin of the New Orleans Saints still toils in relative obscurity, despite averaging 71 catches and 972 yards over the last four seasons.

Another thing: Even the teams with undistinguished wideouts are finding they can win by flooding the secondary. San Diego, once the base of operation for Air Coryell, has topped the NFL in rushing yards per carry the past two years behind the bruising duo of Marion Butts and Rod Bernstine (a converted tight end), whose combined weight is 486 pounds. But former Charger coach Dan Henning, who is now the Lions' offensive coordinator, made a fundamental change in his coaching philosophy after San Diego got off to an 0-5 start last season.

"We'd been running the ball out of necessity, because of a lack of [quality] wide receivers," Henning says. "So we're playing our fifth game, against Kansas City, and we play close to perfect. No turnovers. We outgain them 311 yards to 182. Our backs rush for 156 yards. And we lose 14-13. I'm walking off the field, saying to myself, It doesn't work. In today's football, it just doesn't work."

"The next week we go to play the Raiders in a game we have no business winning, we run four wide receivers, twice as much as I ever have, and we win 21-13. We didn't win all the time when we ran that formation, obviously [San Diego ended up 4-12], but we beat New Orleans with it."

In Detroit, Henning has an abundance of talented young wideouts: Jeff Campbell, Mike Farr, Mel Gray, Willie Green, Aubrey Matthews, Herman Moore and Brett Perriman. "We've got seven guys who are good enough to be starters," says Henning. "It's amazing how good these guys are, and how many there are. The game almost has to change, just to accommodate them."

So what's the next move in this football chess game? It's the defensive coordinators' turn to play, and what we'll likely see is a

■ *Lofton, 36, the quintessential deep threat, hasn't lost a step in keeping up with the youngsters.*



RICK STEWART/ALLSPORT

continuation of the decline of the every-down linebacker, and the hastened rise of the big safety. Several teams are picking up on something the New York Giants helped originate in the mid-'80s, when coach Bill Parcells saw the need for what he called the transition player: the man who could bridge the gap between linebacker and safety.

The Giants brought in the likes of 6-foot, 218-pound Greg Cox and 6-foot, 233-pound David Whitmore, who could play on special teams and were strong enough to play the run and the pass in nickel situations. In Miami, defensive coordinator Tom Olivadotti plays a "buck linebacker," a hard-hitting converted safety who is quick enough to play along the line of scrimmage as the seventh defensive back on obvious passing downs.

The nickel and dime defenses, and oddball variations of these multicoverage systems, soon will be manned by bigger and more physical players in an attempt to rein in this stampede of receivers running wild through secondaries. "Then," says San Diego player personnel director Billy Devaney, "we'll probably see the resurgence of the running back."

A Monk's Existence

Even as he closes in on the alltime reception record, the Redskins' Art Monk remains a distant, mysterious figure **BY WILLIAM NACK**

ART MONK HAD ENDURED THE 1990 SEASON IN SILENCE LONG ENOUGH. AS THE Washington Redskins' preeminent pass receiver for nearly 11 years and now the team's unquestioned leader, he knew there was no getting around it, that there was only one thing left for him to do. As distasteful as the idea was to him—six consecutive words out of his mouth is virtually a speech, by his standards—the time had finally come for him to rise and say his mind. “I had never done anything like that before,” says Monk. “Something inside me moved me to do it. I had to do it.”

It was Saturday night, Dec. 1, in a large meeting room of a Marriott hotel in northern Virginia. Coach Joe Gibbs and his staff had gathered the players together for their usual team meeting there on the night before a home game. The next day they were to play the Miami Dolphins at RFK Stadium. Of course, anyone who had seen the Skins' most recent effort, on Thanksgiving Day—when the struggling Dallas Cowboys had humiliated them in Texas for the better part of 60 minutes and finally whipped them 27-17—figured that the Skins were in for another long afternoon against Miami.

“We couldn't even run a sweep play against Dallas,” recalls Washington tight end Ron Middleton. “It's one of the simplest plays we have, and we couldn't get the ball back to the line of scrimmage. They were stuffing us. So there was a sense of urgency. . . .”

The team's 6-5 record had created an ominous feeling among the Redskins, most of whom were members of the 1987 Super Bowl champion team. They felt as if they were thrashing in a tar pit, disappearing as a playoff contender—and Monk knew it. He had approached Gibbs and gotten permission to hold a players-only meeting after Gibbs had finished with them that night. As the coach led his staff out the door, James Arthur Monk—on his way to the Hall of



■ *With 18 more receptions Monk will reach Largent's career record of 819 catches.*

Fame and to catching more passes than any NFL receiver in history—rose to his feet. “I called this meeting,” Monk said quietly.

The room grew eerily silent. Players stared at each other in disbelief, wondering what was going on. “Everyone looked around and said, ‘Art Monk is going to talk?’” says Middleton. “That had never happened before.”

Wideout Ricky Sanders, under his breath, muttered, “Not the Monkster!”

What Monk said on that December evening, in no more than two minutes on the floor, was as simple as it was eloquent. Speaking softly, in what offensive lineman Joe Jacoby called “a little bit of a butt-chewing, in Art’s way,” he gently but decisively rattled the cage. “I am rededicating myself to this season and this team,” Monk said. “It’s time for everybody to raise it up a notch. We can play a lot better than we’ve been playing, me included. . . . We have to rededicate ourselves. I am. . . . We have to do whatever it takes. And we have to do it now. We can’t wait till next week. It will be too late. If we are going to get to the playoffs, it has to happen *right now*.”

Nearly two years have passed since that night at the Marriott, and even now the Redskins see it as the moment on which their future turned. “That night Art decided to become a general,” says Bobby Mitchell, the Redskins’ assistant general manager and a Hall of Fame wide receiver. “That was the greatest thing that ever happened to us. Man, we took off!”

The Redskins beat the Dolphins 42–20 the next day—“We owned ‘em, both sides of the ball,” recalls Middleton—and lost only one more regular-season game on the way to the playoffs, where they defeated the Philadelphia Eagles before the San Francisco 49ers finally ended it for them. Last year, of course, the Redskins went undefeated through the first 11 regular-season games and wound up losing only twice, by a total of five points. With their run through the playoffs, including a victory over the Buffalo Bills in the Super Bowl, they finished 17–2.

In all, the Skins have won 22 and lost only four since Monk addressed his teammates. And not incidentally, players-only meet-

ings have been a part of the team’s routine on the eve of games. Of course, having spoken his mind once, Monk has said not a word at any of the sessions since the one he called, despite the teasing entreaties of players that he do an encore. “Don’t need to,” he tells them.

But they know he’s there, as he has been for them since the day he arrived out of Syracuse in 1980, a taciturn young man standing 6’ 3”, with a long, fluid stride, a pair of sure hands and a talent for making fearless catches in perilous traffic over the middle. Monk was a first-round draft pick, 18th overall, and for the next 12 seasons—sustained by a furious off-season work ethic that he learned from veteran running back Terry Metcalf in his





SCOTT CUNNINGHAM

second year as a pro—he gradually emerged, in this golden age of receivers, as one of the toughest, most durable and consistent of all. His 106 catches in 1984 is still the NFL record for a single season, and by the time he reaches the age of 35, on Dec. 5, he very likely will have caught more passes in his career than any player in pro football history. Monk begins the season with 801 receptions, only 18 behind the retired Steve Largent's record of 819, and he is as certain of a place in Canton as Joe Montana or Largent himself.

For all the years he has played and the hits he has taken, Monk has not shown signs of yielding to the simple mandates of passing time. "I look at him in his good games last year, and I'm amazed," says San Diego Charger general manager Bobby Beathard, the former Washington G.M. who drafted Monk. "It looks like the same Art Monk. It's the way he takes care of himself. He continues to push himself."

Indeed, if there is a driving force within him, a demon that has pushed him to excel, it is the self-doubt that has pursued him through most of his playing life.

Art Monk, for all that he has done, is a hero in a city that hardly knows him. Private and introspective by nature, religious and family-oriented by choice, Monk has forever preferred the shadows thrown by home fires to fame's swimming lights. He rarely gives interviews, and he has never been one to schmooze with reporters after games. He is the one slipping quietly out the locker-room door, climbing into the Ford Bronco and heading for the suburban Virginia

home, with the two-acre fishing pond out back, to be with his wife, Desiree, and their three kids—James Arthur Jr., 9, Danielle, 8, and Monica, 5. "I do two important things in my life," says Monk. "I play football, and I spend time with my family. Most everything else is a distraction."

Modesty clearly suits the needs of the man. Not only has he helped lead the Redskins to four Super Bowls (three of which they won) in the years he has been in Washington, but more than anyone except Joe Gibbs himself, he has represented football excellence in a town that follows the team and the game with an almost fanatical zeal. Monk is the most regal figure on the team, and he could make whatever he might choose to make of his ce-

lebrity. "If most of us had Art Monk's ability and looks, we'd turn out to be jerks," says Beathard. "He has really handled it well. He could be an anchor on the news. He could do anything he wants. This guy could own Washington."

But that, of course, is not to be. "I don't want to own Washington," he says. "I just want to be Art Monk."

He has been that, with remarkable consistency and few deviations in life and style, since he came of age in the 1960s in White Plains, N.Y., 27 miles north of Manhattan. Monk was born and raised in a racially integrated area called Battle Hill, the second of two children born to Arthur Monk, a welder by trade, and his wife, Lela, a domestic who worked in the tonier New York City suburb of Scarsdale. The family lived in an apartment above the Shiloh Gospel Chapel, where they all attended Sunday services. They were a close-knit, soft-spoken family, and the virtues of perseverance, patience and hard work were exalted daily.

Something of the patience rubbed off early on young Art. His older sister, Barbara, recalls the Christmas that she gave her brother, then five, a toy fishing rod. Lela always kept goldfish in a bowl in the apartment, and one afternoon Barbara came home to find the boy fishing for them with his toy pole. "There he was," she says, "standing in the middle of the living room, holding the rod with the plastic hook in the bowl. Anything he would put his mind to, he would go at it."

What he also learned early, of course, were the ways and rewards of work. "My parents always told us, 'Nothing in life is free. Whatever it is you want, you have to knuckle down and work for it,'" says Monk. "This wasn't just talk. They actually lived it. I saw that in them. My mother was always out working. For a period of time I never even saw my father. By the time I'd get up, he was already gone. That was their way of life."

Raised with affection, the boy had a blissful childhood filled with hours playing summer games in the sandlots and streets: basketball, tackle football, stickball and street hockey by day, and hide-and-seek by night. "I really enjoyed my childhood," he says. "We didn't have a lot of money, but enough to be happy with—to be clothed and with a roof over our heads. I can never remember want or a struggle. I mean, we never had a color TV but we had a car, and there was always food on the table."

Not all was sports and play in the boy's life. His father was a first cousin of Thelonious Monk, the great jazz musician, and young Art was drawn to music naturally, to the electric guitar and even the tuba. In fact he learned to play the tuba so well in the junior high school band that one of his teachers suggested to the family that if he stayed with it, he might one day be proficient enough to get a college scholarship. By the time he entered the 10th grade at White Plains High, though, his athletic ambitions had overtaken the musical ones. Football had become his game, catching passes his unfulfilled passion. "I grew up watching Otis Taylor, Charley Taylor and Paul Warfield," he says. "I would have liked to be a wide receiver, but I didn't think I was quick enough or good enough for that. So I always wanted to be a tight end. I loved catching the ball."

He was in for a wait. Monk was the biggest kid on the junior varsity, and the coaches put him on the line, playing him both ways. Determined to be a receiver, Monk went out for track the following spring, launching a career as a runner that would be filled with more promise than anything he ever showed on a high school football field. "A once-in-a-lifetime athlete to coach," says Nick Panaro, the White Plains track coach in Monk's senior



'92 nfl preview

the season, against Newburgh, he carried 24 times for 105 yards and four touchdowns. "I looked at the Newburgh film recently," says Wintersteen. "Good hard running inside, bouncing off tacklers. . . . We all knew he could play in college."

So did the recruiters, who came sniffing around White Plains again. What sold Syracuse on Monk, as much as anything he showed in football, was the speed and athleticism he had honed in track. In his senior year, in the state championships at White Plains, Monk won the intermediate hurdles in 37.1 seconds, breaking the state record by a full second. In the 120-yard high hurdles, an event he had begun running two months before, he won in 13.5 seconds, .2 faster than the state mark. He ended his track career with a victory in the intermediate hurdles at a national meet for high school champions in California. "He just

■ *As a boy Monk (42, above) wanted to catch the ball; at Syracuse he latched on to a total of 102 passes.*

year. For Monk, as focused as ever, running was only a means to a more coveted end. "I not only wanted to lose weight, but I wanted to enhance my agility, my speed and quickness," he says. "Track allowed me to do that. Once I saw some of the benefits I was getting from it, I really got excited and went full steam."

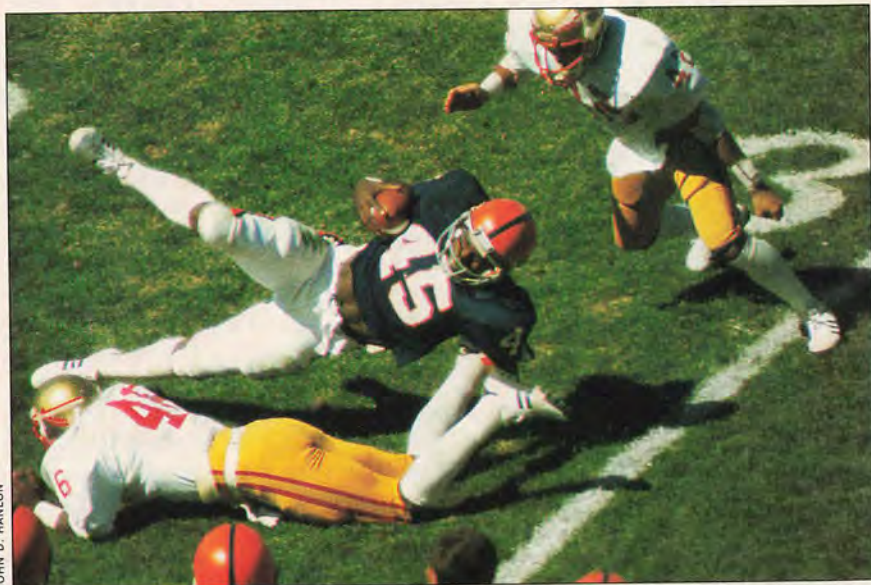
Monk started at tight end his junior year, but he might as well have been a knot in the fence. For that was also the senior year of Sam Bowers, one of the school's most celebrated players, an All-America receiver in various publications and a magnet for college recruiters. White Plains even had a Hail Mary play called Save the Game Sam, which it used to beat archrival Mount Vernon with eight seconds left. "A perfect spiral from the 50-yard line," recalls Bowers. "I was the guy they came to in clutch situations."

Of course, Monk hardly saw the ball at tight end—"He caught only 12 or 13 passes his whole high school career," says Brant Wintersteen, who was then the football coach—but all was not lost playing in Bowers's considerable shadow. When the Syracuse recruiter showed up to see Sam, assistant principal Harry Jefferson pointed him toward Monk, the budding track star. "You're not going to hear much about him," Jefferson told him, "but he's a diamond in the rough as a football player."

Monk, who started out as a sprinter, became a 330-yard intermediate hurdler his junior year, winning races at dual meets that spring. He also showed enormous potential as a decathlete. Without much practice he high-jumped 5' 10", triple-jumped 47 feet and put the shot 53 feet. "Art never practiced the shot put," says Panaro. "But if we needed some points in the event, we'd put in Art and he'd win. Art shot up that year, thinned out and really blossomed as one of our top sprinters."

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None of this was lost on Wintersteen, who switched him from tight end to running back his senior year. Monk struggled early in the season. "He'd get hit in the legs and go down," says Wintersteen. "He wouldn't keep driving." But by the end of the year he was taking the hits and churning. In the penultimate game of



looked like a great, raw, physical talent," says Frank Maloney, then Syracuse's head football coach.

Monk wanted to attend Maryland, but since his mother liked Syracuse, he signed with the Orangemen. Undecided at first about how to best use Art's skills, Maloney made him a wing-back, a runner-receiver out of the backfield. When Monk looks back on that freshman year, a turning point in his life, it is a nightmare revisited. He had two receptions all year. "I couldn't catch a cold," he recalls. "I don't know why. It was just a disaster. I remember practices where they'd throw the ball to me and it would hit my hands and I couldn't catch it. I *knew* I was better than that. I got really depressed and down on myself. And I just made up my mind that this wasn't going to happen again."

What he did, of course, was what he had always done and would always do when the fear of failure had him by the neck. He worked. With a friend, he spent the off-season catching footballs, zillions of them. "I trained like crazy," he says. "I just did every ball drill I could possibly imagine—five days a week. The next year I ran every route as hard as I could. I really focused on the ball. I didn't care what was going on around me. I just really wanted to show them that I was worthy of their scholarship." He had 41 catches for 590 yards, as well as 566 yards rushing. "I think the whole year I may have dropped one ball," he says.

After all those years Monk at last was doing what he loved the most. By the end of his senior year, as one of the leading pass re-



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MITCHELL LATTON

■ *At his football camp, Monk is more expansive.*

ceivers in college (102 catches for 1,644 yards in his Syracuse career), he was displaying hints of the style that would make him a success in the pros. "One of our most effective patterns was across the middle," says Maloney. "Most of the receivers we had heard footsteps, always looking to see who was around. Not Arthur. He'd go for the football. He was a fearless guy with terrific hands, and a tremendous punt returner. Catching punts is totally different from catching kickoffs end over end. On punts, the defense is sniffing your jock when the ball's coming down. We wanted a guy that we knew could catch the ball, so I put him back there. God, he was good at that."

Indeed, his punt returning had caught the eyes of Redskin scouts. "We knew he had great hands," says Charley Taylor, who scouted Monk for the Skins. And hands, says Beathard, were what they needed. Monk was watching the draft on television when commissioner Pete Rozelle announced Washington's top pick. "I was shocked," says Monk, who was completing work toward a degree in speech and communications. "I just couldn't believe it, especially the first round. I never grew up saying I wanted to be a professional football player. I thought it was too farfetched. I just loved the game and figured that college was about as far as I was going to go." Monk's expressions of disbelief that he was drafted so high were not false modesty. After four years of coaching him, Maloney came to know that it was neither bravura nor self-assurance that powered Monk from day to day.

"I always viewed him as being insecure about his ability," Ma-

loney says. "That's why he always listened to everything you said. He fears failure. That's why he works out like a madman. He fears the end of his career. He fears slowing down. That's a wonderful thing to have, that fear."

It pushed him from college to the pros, chased him into the training room, haunted him in the endless, lonely off-seasons on the running tracks. "Once I got to the pros, I thought, *Maybe* I can compete," Monk says. "I got some confidence. But it seemed like, no matter how well I did, I always felt like it wasn't good enough. I don't know where this came from, but I always felt I've got to do better—it's good, but I've got to do better! I worked hard because I never felt I had the talent."

It is no wonder, given the underlying currents at work, that Terry Metcalf should leave such a lasting imprint on his life. Gibbs had coached Metcalf during the player's glory days as a running back with the St. Louis Cardinals, and in 1981, Gibbs's first year in Washington, he brought the fading Metcalf, a renowned workaholic and student of the game, to the Redskins as a kind of player-coach and exemplar-in-residence. Metcalf bought a home across the street from Monk, in Arlington, Va., and the two men became inseparable.

"Terry had a motor in him," Monk says. "We'd go to a high school track at nine o'clock and run. We did a lot of agility work, running up and down stairs. Midafternoon we'd go and play eight games of racquetball. Then we'd play basketball at night. Or we'd go jogging. Or riding our bikes. One time we rode from Arlington to Redskin Park, 20 miles one way, and back."

Monk had never submitted himself to such torture. "If I said to Terry, 'I don't feel like working today,' he'd drag me out of the house," Monk says. "He reinforced what I had learned from my parents. I actually think I got a little quicker working with Terry. And I just felt better about myself, my abilities."

Metcalf retired after a season with the Skins, and over the years Monk added a stitch here and a wrinkle there to the regimen. The largest wrinkle of all was a 45-degree, 15-yard hill at George Mason University, not far from Monk's home, that he has been running for years. Redskin wideout Gary Clark trained with Monk in the summer of 1987 and recalls the horrors of trying to keep up with him. "It was 25 times uphill, straight leg-

pumps," says Clark. "Then 25 times backward. Then 25 times in a stutter step. Then six 220s on the track and six 110s. I finally told him, 'You're crazy! I'll do my own program.' He's totally focused—God, family, football—and he knows what he has to do in each facet of his life. If I had a kid, I'd say, 'Art, you raise him for 10 years and then send him back to me.'"

Not surprisingly, Monk's game is just as grounded as his life. He has been no Jerry Rice or Lynn Swann out there, soaring after footballs in midair balletic spins. Rather, the abiding image of him is as the man in motion at the snap. Five yards across the line he slants toward

■ *High school star Bowers didn't make the grades.*



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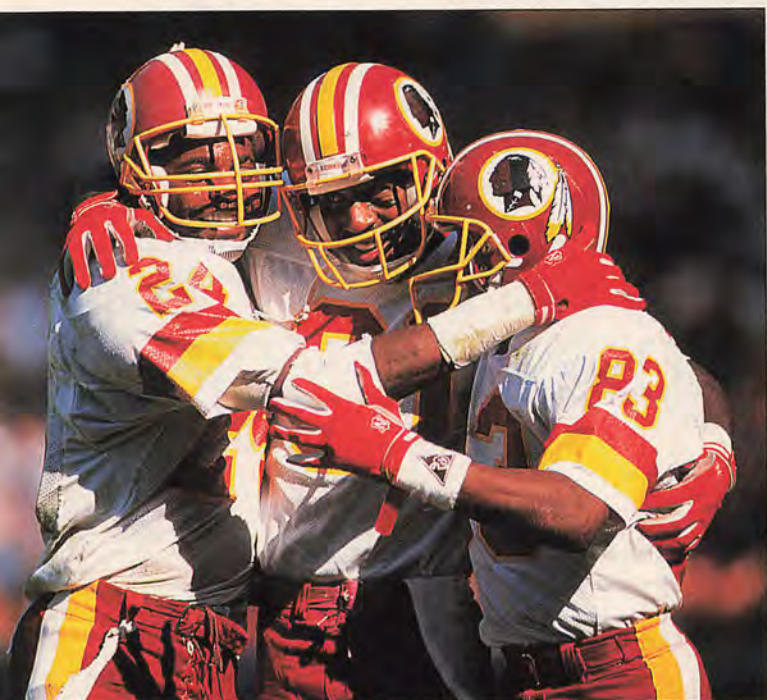
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the sideline or breaks for the middle. "He is not your typical receiver, who goes out there and runs patterns in air and space and catches balls," says Gibbs. "Art's the strongest outside receiver I have ever coached, and he has caught a lot of balls inside and taken the hit."

Monk has taken a fearful beating over the years, but he has never been one to take the easy, tiptoeing way out of perilous straits. Last Nov. 10, late in a game the Skins were winning easily against the Atlanta Falcons, Monk caught a pass for a first down. "He got pinned by a defender on the sideline," says Wayne Sevier, the Washington special teams coach. "There was nowhere to go. A lot of guys would have stepped out. Instead, he drilled the guy in the face and got an extra couple yards."



JOHN BIEWER

■ *Even Monk (center) can get caught up in a victory.*

Unhappy with the members of his kickoff team for letting up late in the same game—they had blown three coverages in a row—Sevier a few days later showed them a film clip of that Monk play. "I told them," he says, "'Here's a guy who's going to the Hall of Fame, and watch what he does here.' Before he's through, he's going to do something that has never been done in football before. He's going to catch a thousand balls."

Of course, Monk plays the game in the only style that suits him, with focus and surpassing self-control. In contrast to Clark, who is given to outbursts, Monk is mute in the face of cornerbacks who try to bait him verbally. Over the years Monk has taken Clark aside to give him what Clark calls "Art's usual calm-down speech: Don't show so much emotion on the field. You need to tone it down a little bit. Let your actions speak for you."

If Monk is a largely silent, austere presence on that ball club, he is given to occasional moments of levity. "The man's 34 years old, and he's still shooting spitballs across the room during meetings," says Clark. "He plays practical jokes now and then. Once we were in the middle of practice, and Art hid [running back] Gerald Riggs's helmet in the weeds."

The momentary playfulness aside, Monk has always conveyed an aura of strength in calm. But there was a time, five years ago, when the quiet exterior belied the turmoil within. In 1987 it appeared he had everything a man could want: He was young, handsome and rich. He had a family he loved and a future without limits in a town that revered him. He had a Super Bowl ring, though winning it was not what he had expected it to be. "You're happy you won, but the feeling just isn't what you'd imagine it to be," he says. "It's not as good."

"I just wasn't happy with the way my life was going," he says. "I had an empty feeling inside, like something was missing. I was always reaching for something to make me happy or feel good—cars and money and houses. But whatever it was out there, it wasn't doing it. I really struggled for a while."

As a child he had gone to church and Sunday school, but not willingly. "I had a lot of friends, and I was having a good time," he says. "I didn't feel the need." Until he came to this troubled point in his life. Then he became aware of the serenity that enveloped some teammates who held regular Bible studies together. "I just watched the life they were living and the joy they felt," he says, and he asked if he could join them—and he was born again. "All those things I'd learned in those early years came flooding back," he says. "I said, 'My parents were right. This is what I need.' It made a big difference in my life."


Sixteen years have passed since he left White Plains, and today he is perceived in that town as a kind of folk hero. "Back then, when I was in high school, you'd never have thought Artie would do what he did," says Sam Bowers, a security guard on the 8-to-4 shift at White Plains Hospital Center. "They would have thought I would, first." Alas, poor grades did Bowers in. "I had over 250 letters from schools trying to recruit me," he says. "But the first thing they'd want to see was my GPA. Once they saw that, they'd kind of back off. It hurt."

It still does. Bowers grabbed at a football career here and there—at three small colleges, through five tryouts with NFL teams and finally three years as a tight end with the New Jersey Generals in the USFL. "I haven't played in years," he says. "I screw around in softball now. I feel proud of Artie. He's keeping our school up there, in the limelight."

On the campus of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., it is Monday, July 20, the first day of Redskin training camp. Monk is sitting in a foyer of one of the players' dorms, stiff-arming a mention of his heading for the Hall of Fame—"What determines a Hall of Famer?" he asks—and stutter-stepping around a question about his inevitably breaking the Largent record. "I don't take anything for granted," he says. "If I need one catch to be the alltime anything, I still need one catch. I don't like to assume anything or start feeling good about myself."

It is growing late, and Monk is getting edgy, looking at his watch. Afternoon practice is about to begin, and there are the new guys out there who want his job and, he knows, come September, the old cornerbacks and linebackers who want his head. The fear is back. And the doubts are gnawing at him again, all but one—the one about who he is.

"Coming out of college," says James Arthur Monk, "one thing I always said was that I would never want circumstances to change who I am, regardless of how good things might get, regardless of how bad things might get. I always want to stay who I am as a person. I think I've done a pretty good job at that." ■



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NEIL LEIFER

War Stories

Lance Alworth and Willie Brown, rivals from the bump-and-run era, recall their classic battles and reflect on today's less-physical game

BY PAUL ZIMMERMAN

THEY WERE BORN FOUR MONTHS APART IN 1940, AND THEY played their high school football within 100 miles of each other in Mississippi, Lance Alworth in Brookhaven, Willie Brown in Yazoo City. A decade later they were defining an era of professional football.

Alworth, with his burst of speed and his leaping catches, as explosive as the lightning bolt on the side of his San Diego Charger helmet, was the American Football League's showpiece, its deep threat. With his baby face and sandy crew cut—Bambi, they nicknamed him—he looked 16 years old, but the All-America out of Arkansas was instant box office for a new league that was establishing itself through the pass. He put together seven straight 1,000-yard receiving seasons (1963–69), a feat that has never been duplicated in pro football. In 1965 he gained 1,602 yards, second-best of all time, and averaged 23.2 yards a catch.

Brown, a linebacker for a Grambling team that sent nine players into the pros, struggled after signing as a free agent with the Houston Oilers, who converted him to defensive back and then cut him before the 1963 season began. But he was picked up by the Denver Broncos, became a starter and then was traded to the Oakland Raiders four seasons later. Brown became the premier cornerback at a time when AFL secondaries were trying desperately to equalize the offense-defense mismatch. Oversized at 215 pounds, gifted with a burst of speed almost as explosive as Al-

worth's, he lasted 16 years and made the Hall of Fame as soon as he was eligible. So did Alworth, whose career was five seasons shorter.

They faced each other 24 times, counting preseason games. Their battles became classics. Brown was the master of the bump-and-run, Alworth the ultimate escape artist. In July they met again at Long Beach State, where Brown has taught in the phys-ed department since the school's football team, which he coached, was scrapped for budgetary reasons after last season. Alworth, a partner in a company that builds and sells mini-storage facilities nationwide, made the hour-and-a-half drive north from his home in Del Mar, Calif.

They were brought together to talk football, to trade old war stories and to take a look at what their slice of the game had become. "How many passes would you catch today," I asked Alworth, "in this era of no bumping downfield and of quarterbacks throwing 30 to 40 passes a game?"

"As many as they would throw to me," he said, flashing the little boy's grin that had earned him his nickname. And I remembered a conversation of 25 years ago, when I told Alworth something that New York Jet wideout George Sauer had said, that he could catch the little Joe Namath square-outs all day, 20 of them maybe, except that his body couldn't take it, the cornerbacks would tear his ribs apart. "Gee," Alworth had said, wistfully, "I wish they'd throw me 20 passes a game."

"Hunger, he always had that great hunger for the ball," Brown said. "Shoot, in today's system, with all those zone coverages, Lance would have over 100 catches a year easy."

"Yeah, this era would be fun," Alworth said. "Of course it might not be fun for the defensive backs. One thing I do notice is that the interference rules are so much tighter now. They seem to call it every time a guy turns around. I remember I was always yelling at the officials, 'Pass interference! Pass interference! Call it!' And the official would tell me, 'If I call it on him I've got to call it on you, too.'"

"You were known to occasionally push off," Brown said.

"Hell, I had to do something," Alworth said. "The problem was, you'd get away from the first bump and then the guy would hold you. The best thing that ever happened to me was when the Chargers got tear-away jerseys. Seems I was always running through a forest of hands. I felt like yelling, 'Hey, let me out of here!' But even with that, I can't remember our guys dropping as many balls as they do now."

"Did we drop that many passes?" he asked Brown.

"No, hell no," Brown said.

"I mean, we dropped our share," Alworth said, "but not as many as today. We didn't get thrown to that much, so we had to make do with what we got."

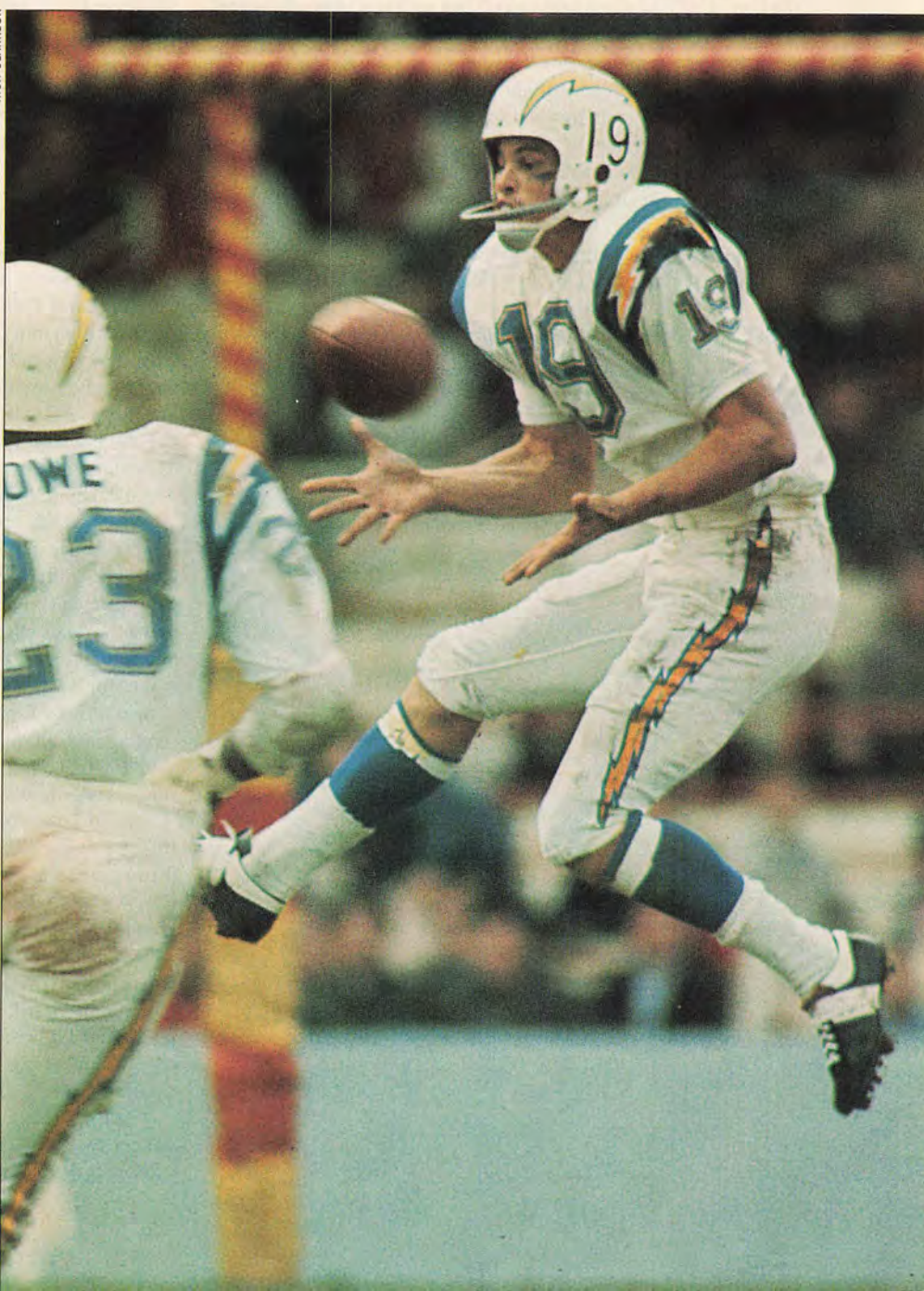
The rule changes in 1978 that limited defensive backs to one bump of the receiver within five yards of the line of scrimmage dealt a severe blow to the big, physical cornerback.

"You would escape Willie's first bump," Alworth said, "and you thought you were free, and *wham*, you'd get it again—from where you didn't expect it. It was always something to be concerned about, always something to get you off balance. Now even that first bump seems like a dying art. You don't see receivers knocked off balance the way they used to be. It's not really taught in the colleges or the pros."

"There are guys who can still do it, but not many," Brown said.

■ Alworth was all-world in '65; Brown (opposite) was TD-bound in Super Bowl XI.

RICH CLARKSON



"Albert Lewis of the Chiefs can; he's the best. Terry McDaniel of the Raiders is a comer. The problem is technique. Guys don't know what to do after they miss the bump."

"Number one," Alworth said, "you don't miss."

"But they do miss," Brown said, "and then I see them panic. 'Oh, hell, now he's going to go deep on me.' So they turn and they're running, running from behind. They don't know where to go. Next time, they're scared, and they're giving ground."

The new rules also brought in a new type of receiver, the 5' 8", 160-pounder, who was practically unknown in the old era, when a Willie Brown or a Mel Blount of the Pittsburgh Steelers would knock him five yards off his pattern.

"There's still a place for the big receiver," Alworth said. "I like watching Art Monk, the way he fights for the ball. You don't see a lot of guys doing that. And Jerry Rice is in a class by himself."

"Rice reminds me of you," Brown said. "So quick getting off the line, real fluid downfield, and then that extra gear, that overdrive and the leaping ability. Zoom, zoom, and it's over. That's what fooled people about Rice, coming into the pros. They didn't understand his speed. They went by the stopwatch, but he had competitive speed, football speed."

"One thing receivers like Rice and Monk have now is a system that allows them to break patterns," Alworth said. "They have their own optional reads. We had to run disciplined patterns. We couldn't break them. I knew what the defense was doing on my side, but I didn't pay attention to the whole design."

"Under [Charger coach] Sid Gillman the quarterback did all

■ *In July, Alworth and Brown bumped into each other again.*



CHAIK MOLENHOUSE

the reading, all the work. He could tell at a glance what was open. He went first man, second, third, on his reads, and the way our system was designed, somebody was going to be open. And if the quarterback keyed properly, then the pass would be completed. They don't seem to have to carry that much of a load now, and I don't see as many great quarterbacks coming out of college as I used to. And it seems to take them longer to develop.

"There were things that John Hadl and I cooked up together, though. I could never take the inside on Willie; he'd square up on you, and you simply couldn't get inside. So I'd take a few quick steps outside and stop. Next play I'd do it again. I was trying to get him to turn his head, and if he would, if he'd get impatient, then as soon as he turned to look elsewhere, I'd take off. I'd go back to the huddle, and John would say, 'Is he ready yet?' and I'd say, 'Not yet, John.' Then I'd tell him, 'O.K., now, he's ready.' Sometimes it would work, sometimes it wouldn't."

"Yeah, I remember one time you got me, the time I was with Denver, remember?" Brown said. "I had a sprained ankle. Didn't start the game. Then I came in, and I pulled a hamstring. You knew it right away. You were laughing when you came up to the line, and I knew you were going to take me deep. That's just what you did, and you caught a touchdown."

"Al Davis called me up after that," Alworth said. "He was with the Raiders. He'd been my receivers coach my first year with the Chargers. He asked about Willie, said he had a chance to trade for him. I said, 'Al, he's the best, no one close.' He said, 'Well, what happened?' I said, 'Hell, Al, he was hurt.' The next year there was Willie in Oakland. What a mistake I made!"

"Best thing that ever happened to my career," Brown said.

And how would a Willie Brown handle, say, a Jerry Rice today? "Same way I played against Lance. Make sure you get that first bump. Actually, a lot of times I wasn't interested in bumping guys all the way downfield. The five-yard zone is enough, if you use the right technique, if you have size and quickness and confidence in your closing speed, the ability to close on the ball."

"All of which you had," Alworth said. "But you know something, I'd have to play differently against you now. I'd have to run my routes differently. Artificial turf changed the way you run. You have to run under control, from the hips down. You can't make the quick cuts you used to. Plant your foot on synthetic turf and it might slip. You have to run more rounded routes now. It makes for better angles for the DBs."

Synthetic turf, million-dollar contracts, earrings . . . it's a different game, all right.

"Now there's one thing I couldn't have done—worn an earring," Alworth said. "My mother would have killed me."

"When I was coaching here in Long Beach," Brown said, "if I'd see a player with an earring I'd take it away from him and give it to one of the girls. Some of those earrings were pretty nice, too. A guy would see me coming across the campus and he'd grab for his ear right away and he'd be unscrewing that thing."

"Maybe it's an ego thing," Alworth said, "but I got over my ego problems pretty early. I'd go somewhere in the off-season to pick up an award; I'd get off the plane wearing my T-shirt and jeans, and I'd hear myself paged because the guy who was supposed to meet me had missed me. Then he'd say, 'Gee, I didn't think you were so little.'"

"Guys like Lance and me," Brown said, "we didn't need that pat on the back, that constant ego reinforcement. Maybe our egos were beyond that."

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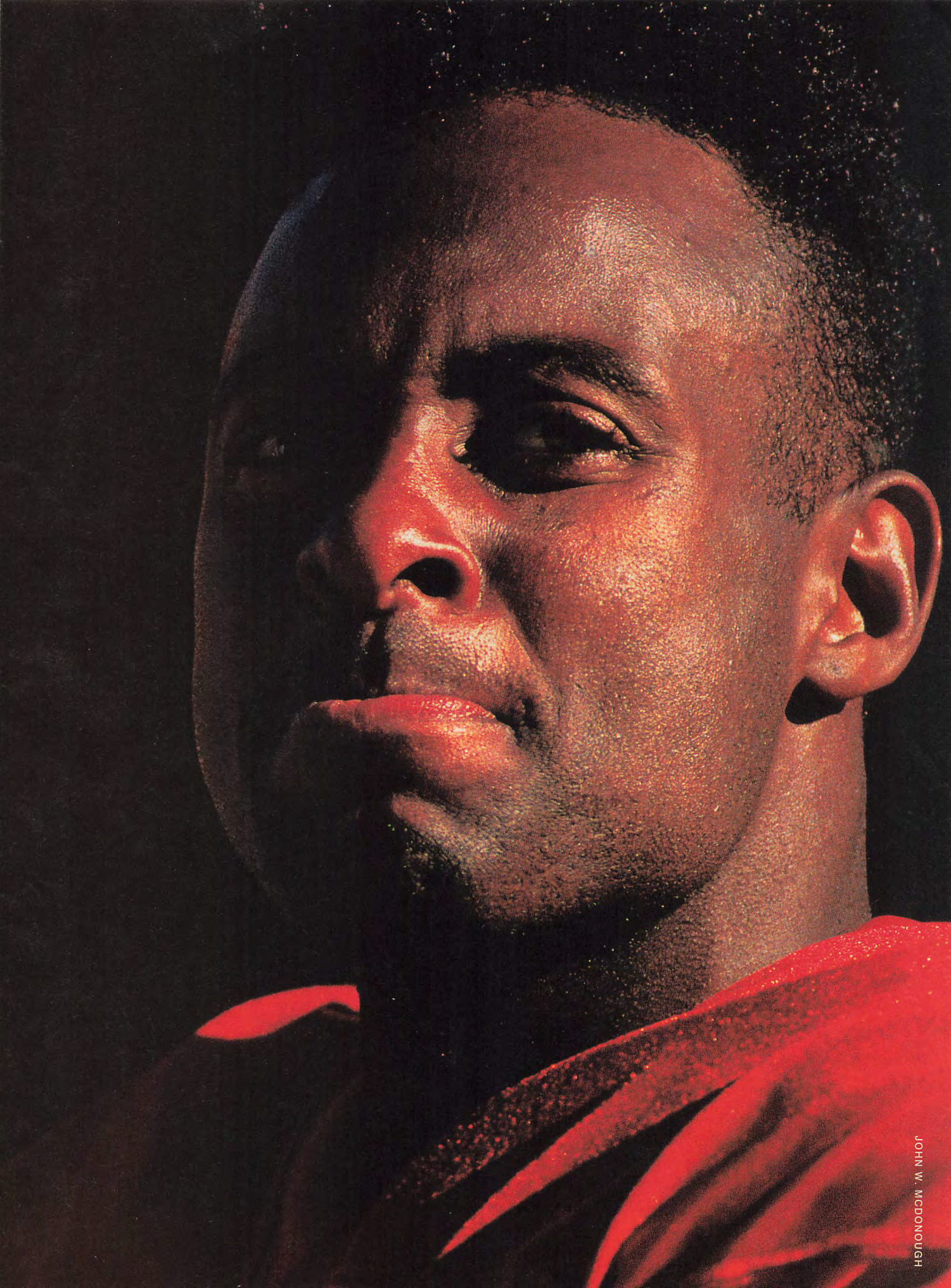
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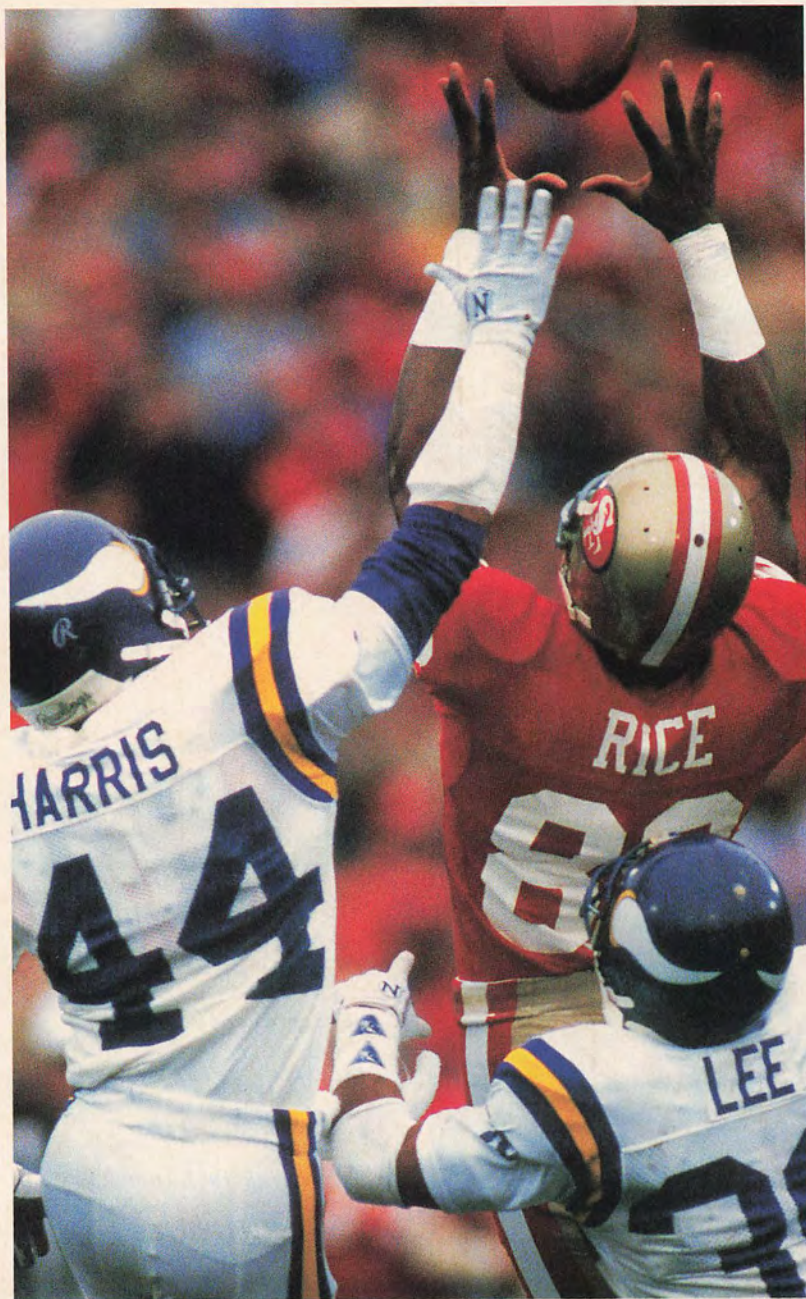
'92

nfl preview



Only one player in NFL history, Lance Alworth, comes within 10 yards of Rice's career average of 84 receiving yards per game. With a record 215 yards in Super Bowl XXIII, Rice was the game's MVP.

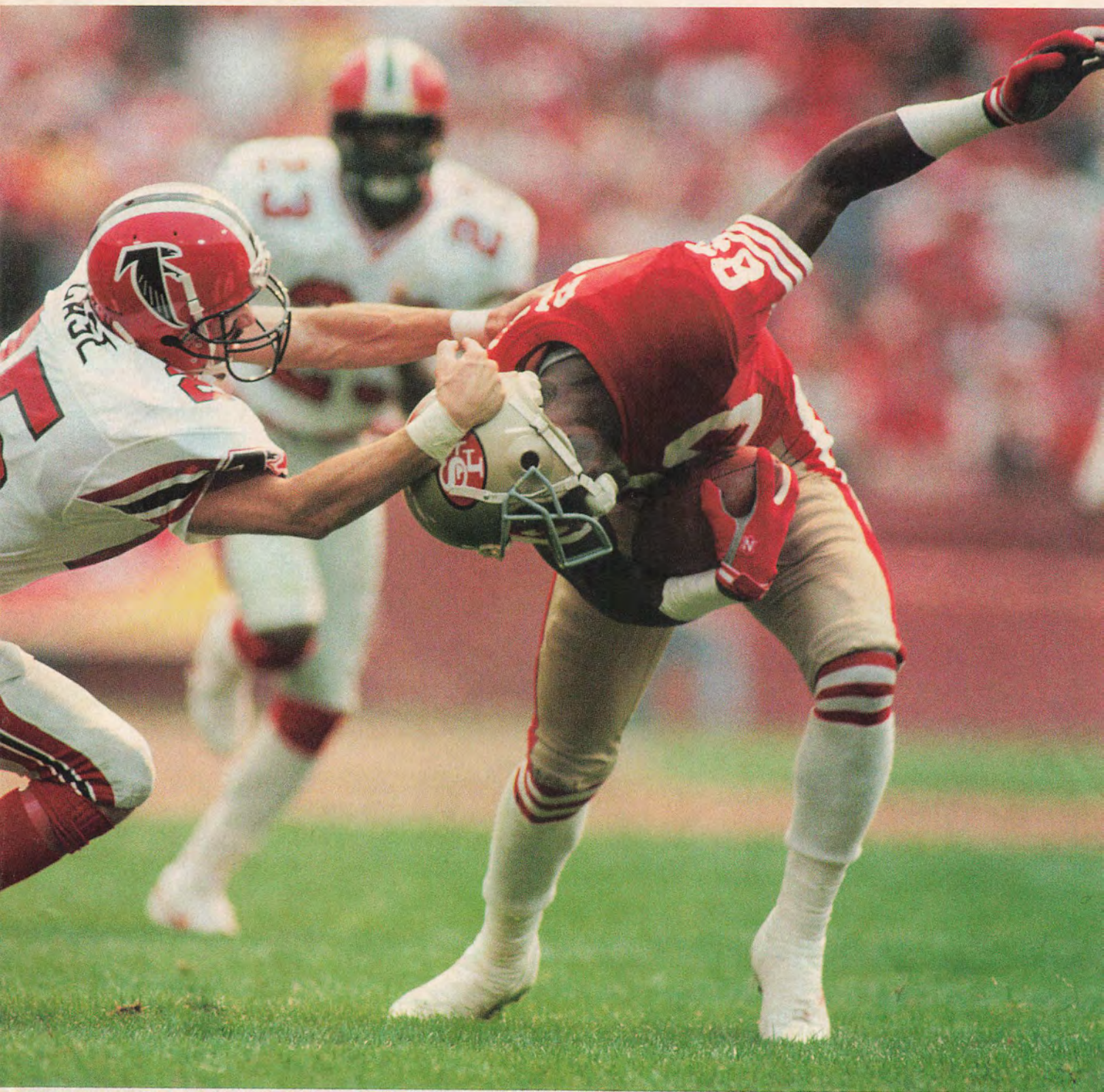
"Receivers get beat up. They miss time. Not Rice," says New York Giant director of pro personnel Tim Rooney. "He's played every game . . .



PETER READ MILLER



MICKEY PFLEGER



*... with every game a
big game because
everybody gets up to
play him and the 49ers.
And his performance
never drops off."*



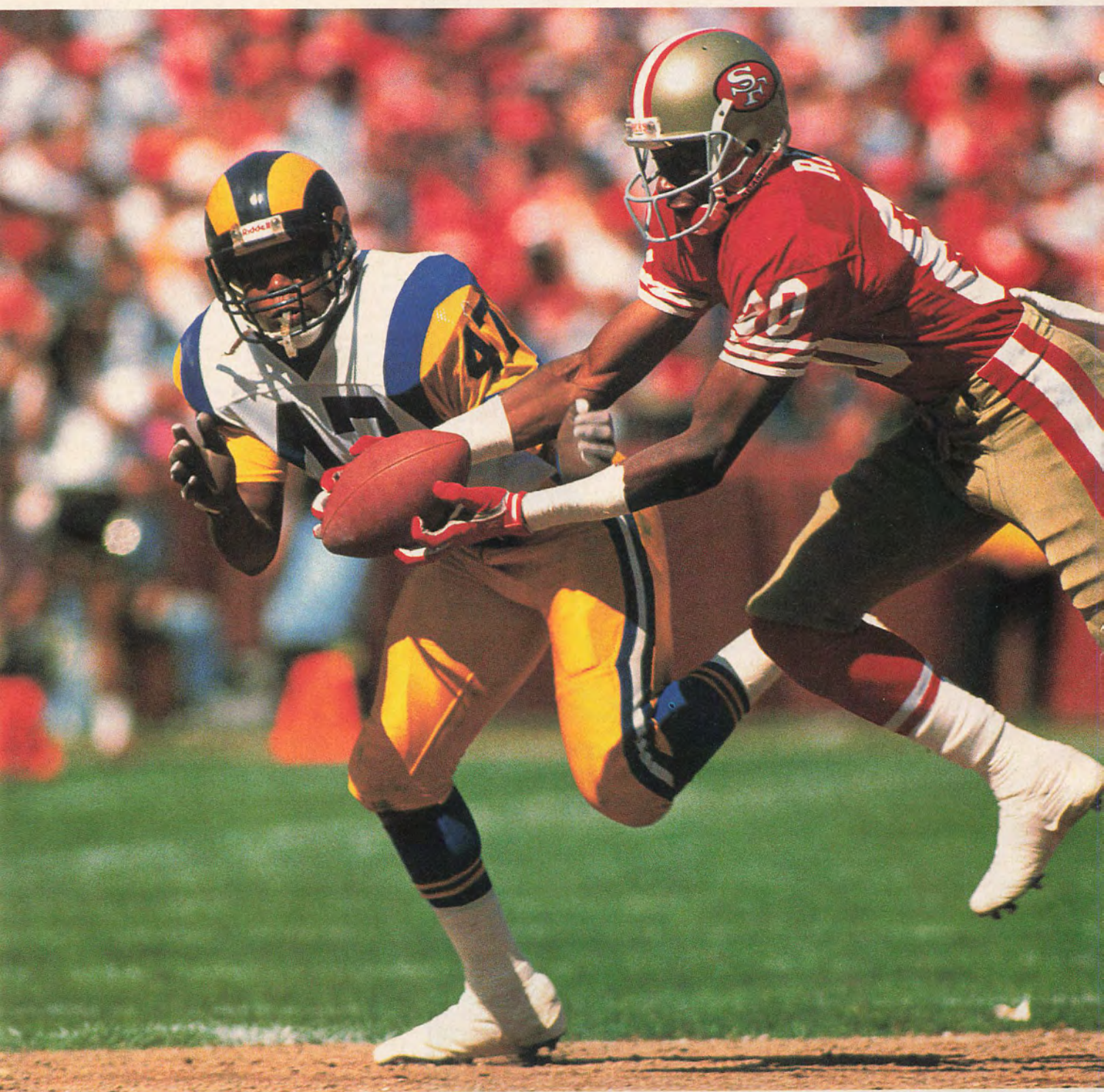
WALTER IOOSS, JR.



'92

nfl preview

In one out of every eight games in his seven-year career, Rice has outscored the opposing team by himself. And 19 of his 93 touchdown receptions have been game-winners.

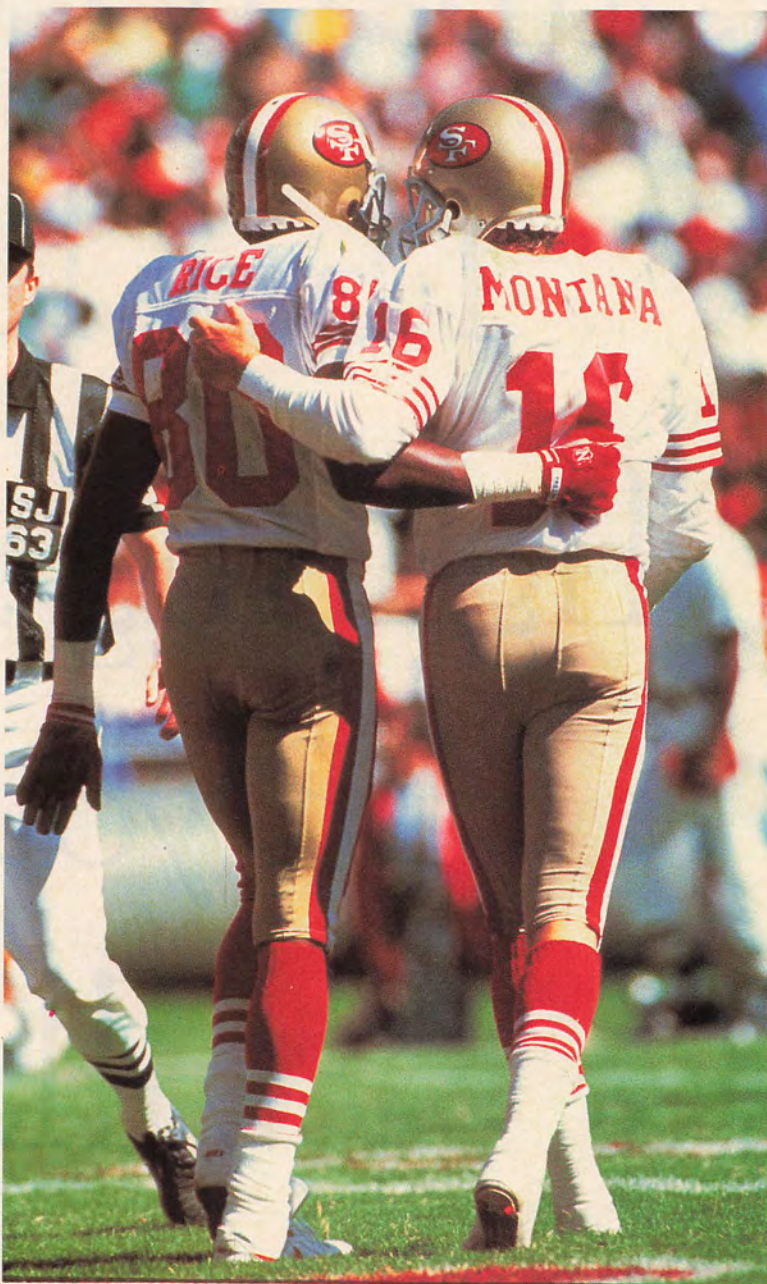


*No player has caught
500 passes at a
younger age than
Rice, who got number
500 at 29 years, 49
days last Dec. 1.*



PETER READ MILLER

In the past five years Rice has caught 75 TD passes, 30 more than runner-up Mark Clayton of Miami. "People don't realize he's prolonged my career," quarterback Joe Montana says. "I'm grateful for that."



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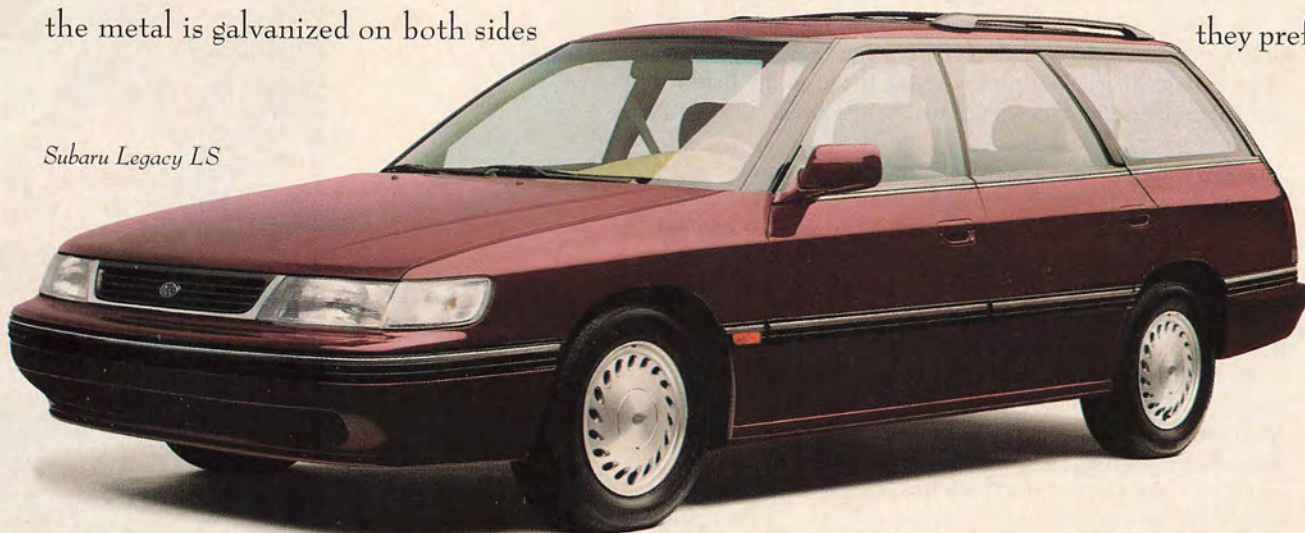
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'Never Back Down'

Steeler cornerback Rod Woodson learned that lesson early in life, and it pays off when he faces the top receivers **BY JILL LIEBER**

WHEN PITTSBURGH STEELER CORNERBACK ROD WOODSON defines his ethnic background on questionnaires, he checks the boxes next to BLACK, WHITE and OTHER. The youngest of three brothers who had a black father and a white mother, the 27-year-old Woodson never has fit neatly into some of life's tidy little categories—whether they refer to something as sensitive as race or as trivial as football. While growing up in Fort Wayne, Ind., he was the target of cruel taunts about his parentage, and as a young football player he was so versatile that his coaches couldn't settle on one position for him.

But today he is a proud husband and father in his own mixed family, and he's the rare cornerback who can stand up to the wave of outstanding receivers in the NFL. In fact, on most Sundays he outplays the receivers who come his way.

"I was taught to never back down," Woodson says. "When you're mixed, you have three options: stay in the middle, pick a side or stand on your own. My parents let me know I didn't have to pick a side, because I always had a friend in my family. I learned to stand up for myself and to never be afraid."

James Woodson, a black laborer from Tennessee, came north looking for work in Fort Wayne in the late 1950s and befriended Linda Jo Doerflein, a white woman with a middle-class upbringing who was working with the handicapped. They married in 1960, moved into a two-bedroom house in a predominantly black neighborhood near the projects and went about raising a family that would grow to include three sons, Joe, Jamie and Rod.

But the Woodsons did not enjoy a normal middle-America existence. There were times when Linda Jo was chased by Black Muslims while walking in her neighborhood, and once she was pushed down and knocked out. Members of the Ku Klux Klan and a local group called the Black Jesses made harassing phone calls to the Woodson house, but James downplayed the threats by encouraging his sons to make fun of the callers before hanging up. One of the racist groups went so far as to mail a package that contained a lock of blonde hair, an earring and a letter

The product of a mixed marriage, Rod knows the pressures Marikah will encounter.







■ Woodson thinks *Slaughter* doesn't show enough respect.

threatening Linda Jo with physical harm if she didn't leave her husband.

"The whites would call me mulatto, nigger, zebra and half-breed," Woodson says. "The blacks would call me yellow boy, white boy or mixed breed. I dated both black and white girls, and when I was with the white girls, I'd hear, 'Can you believe she's with that nigger?' I never knew who my true friends were, so I had to stick with my own. The only people I knew who were mixed, like me, were my brothers, and that made us a very close and protective family. No threats could intimidate our family."

Woodson's sense of his own individuality and his lack of fear have helped make him one of the premier defensive players in the NFL, as well as a superb kickoff and punt returner. He has been named to the last two Pro Bowls as a cornerback for the AFC, after having been selected to the 1989 squad as the return specialist for his NFL-best 27.3-yard kickoff-return average.

How tough is Woodson? During a game the only protection he wears, other than a helmet, are shoulder pads—nothing on his knees, thighs, hips, elbows, ribs or neck, not even a jockstrap or a cup. "To play cornerback you have to be the best athlete on the field," Woodson says. "You're all by yourself against a wide receiver. You have to run backward, which isn't natural, then turn and sprint as soon as the receiver makes his break, matching him stride for stride at top speed."

"If you want to be the best cornerback, you have to play like a linebacker, too. You have to take on pulling guards and tackles, and you must hit tight ends and running backs. Most cornerbacks, if they're honest, will say, 'I'm a cover guy. I don't want to get involved in contact.' You can't be passive. If you don't sell out on every play, you'll come up a play or two short."

Woodson, at six feet and 202 pounds, is built more like a run-

ning back than a defensive back. He has terrific speed—4.29 in the 40—with great explosiveness and balance, all of which he developed in training as a hurdler and sprinter. While at Purdue from 1983 to '87, Woodson was a four-time Big Ten indoor champion in the 55-meter hurdles and twice won the 60-meter-dash title. In the summer of '87, after only two weeks of training for the European track circuit, Woodson ran the 110 hurdles in 13.29, which tied the fourth-best time in the world that year.

However, he approached hurdling with a football player's mentality, running through the hurdles instead of clearing them cleanly. "In practice, blood was always streaming down his legs," says Purdue track coach Mike Poehlein. "He had scars all over his knees. Most hurdlers would call for medical attention, but Rod wouldn't stop until practice was over. If you could strap a heart monitor on him before an athletic performance, you'd find that his pulse doesn't go up."

But Woodson's heart did race early in his pro career, when he was still learning to perfect his play at cornerback. Accustomed to being the best athlete on his team at every level of football from the Police Athletic League through college, Woodson was never fazed by his coaches' penchant for shifting him from position to position as needed. Consequently he didn't master any one position. Even in his final game with the Boilermakers he played tailback and cornerback, returned kickoffs and punts and was on the special teams coverage units. He rushed for 93 yards, caught three passes for 67 yards, made 10 tackles, forced a fumble and returned two kickoffs for 46 yards and three punts for 30 yards in Purdue's 17-15 victory over Indiana.

But that iron-man feat didn't count for much in the summer of 1987, after Woodson had been drafted in the first round by the Steelers and it came time to line up at right cornerback, the position manned so brilliantly by Steeler Hall of Famer Mel Blount from 1970 to '83. "I was a nervous wreck," Woodson says. "I'd relied too long on my speed and physical talents, and I didn't understand the game."

Tutored by two Steeler coaches—Tony Dungy, now the Minnesota Vikings' defensive coordinator, and Rod Rust, now Dungy's counterpart on the New York Giants—Woodson learned how to dissect a receiver's game: How wide does he line up? How does he come off the line of scrimmage? What are his downfield moves? Then he memorized the responsibilities at each of the other positions in the Pittsburgh defense and eventually picked up the nuances of opposing offenses.

"You've got to resign yourself to the fact that you can't stop the perfect pass," Woodson says. "Let the receiver catch the ball but then tell him, 'I'll be here all day. I'm not going anywhere. Next time you're going to have to pay.' You've got to respect wide receivers but never fear them. If you fear them, you'll lose."

Here's Woodson's take on some of the NFL's best receivers:

- Jerry Rice, San Francisco 49ers: "It has been said Rice can't be covered man-to-man, but I say, Why not try? Why be afraid of a receiver? The best way to play Rice is to be physical, to run with him and make him work. Push him down the field. Jam him in the face. Let him know you're there. And tire him out."
- Art Monk, Washington Redskins: "It's hard to play Monk physical because he loves to push you. He understands the little things you can do that are illegal, and he gets away with them. He loves to throw an elbow to the chest, which throws off your leverage, and he has an excellent swim move, grabbing your jersey and throwing you back to get around you."



EMMITT SMITH • DALLAS COWBOYS

PHOTO BY KEN AMMON

LOOK FOR THE STARS AND YOU'LL FIND

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● James Lofton, Buffalo Bills: "You've got to respect his speed. I've watched film and said, 'He can't be that fast.' Then last year he burned me for a touchdown on a takeoff. First and foremost, play the deep ball with Lofton, then try to jar it loose. He's getting up in age, maybe his body can't take the pounding."

● Michael Irvin, Dallas Cowboys: "Michael's the hardest receiver to tackle because he's so big [6' 2", 199 pounds]. Most smaller receivers, like Ernest Givins of Houston, aren't strong; you can manhandle them. But Michael can manhandle DBs. He has slapped me back two or three times."

● Webster Slaughter, Cleveland Browns: "He doesn't respect defensive backs. He rolls the ball back in your face after a catch. He'll spike the ball after a 10-yard out. He loves to talk trash. Get him frustrated before he gets you frustrated."

Woodson comes by his elevated, but healthy, self-esteem from his parents, who gave him plenty of love, attention and positive reinforcement. A factory worker at International Harvester by day, James took his sons along when he moonlighted as the cleanup man at four theaters in Fort Wayne. Linda Jo hopscotched from one low-paying job to another, adjusting her work schedule to meet the children's needs. At various times she was a teacher's aide at her sons' elementary school and a volunteer homeroom mother. Linda Jo even served as a Boy Scout troop leader. "People always told me, 'You must have 16 children, of all different races,'" Linda Jo says, "and I'd say, 'No, I only have three.'"

The Woodson family suffered a traumatic loss in May, when James, 64, apparently recovering from brain surgery necessitated by an aneurysm, died several days after the procedure. He had developed a bacterial infection in his urinary tract, and it spread to his brain. James went into a coma and was declared brain dead.

While the Woodsons were waiting for a second and third opinion before deciding to have James disconnected from life-support equipment, Rod's middle brother, Jamie, 28, an aspiring actor who lives in Chicago, buckled under the emotional strain and got into a heated exchange with Rod at the hospital. Later Jamie marched into his parents' home, right past two police officers who had been called to help control the situation, and took two swings at his younger brother. Rod says he

didn't retaliate, but as the police tried to calm Jamie, there was pushing and shoving, and Jamie and Rod were arrested for allegedly assaulting one of the officers. A trial is set for Nov. 18.

Afterward Jamie admitted to Rod that the helplessness and frustration over the sudden deterioration of his father's condition had overwhelmed him. From Jamie's point of view, when Rod, the NFL star, was present at the hospital, the doctors seemed more forthright and attentive to their father. "If Rod had been there the whole time," Jamie still says, "maybe my father wouldn't have died."

"It was the first time Jamie ever told me how he felt about others treating me different from him," says Rod, who, when his father's prognosis had looked good after the initial surgery, had returned to his home in the Pittsburgh suburb of Wexford. "All my life I've known what it's like to be accepted not for what I am inside, but for what I look like or, later in life, for being a successful athlete. I told Jamie that I'm still the same person I was in diapers, and that I'd be his brother when football's over. Nothing can ever come between us."

Because of the love his parents shared in their 32 years of marriage and the strong family bonds that developed in the Woodson household, Rod was undeterred in 1989 when he fell in love with Nickie Theede, who is white. Now married, Rod and Nickie are the parents of two-year-old Marikah, with another child due in December.

"Any mixed relationship goes through more strain and, ultimately, more growth," Woodson says. "One day, Marikah got away from me at a playground in Pittsburgh, and I chased after her. Somebody yelled, 'Whose child is that?' She's so fair-skinned that when I said that she belonged to me, I got some funny looks, as if they didn't believe me. Society considers me to be black. That leaves out half my heritage, and that's not fair."

"I'll let Marikah know that there are choices you make in life, with friends and in dating, and I'll tell her that when people find out she's one-quarter black, they'll probably still consider her to be black. She too will find out who her true friends are, but that's a valuable lesson to learn. My parents never allowed me to get to that stage every kid of any color goes through: Who am I? Where do I fit in? Marikah will always know she's special and that she's an important person."



■ *The Woodson trio—(from left) Joe, Rod and Jamie in 1968—grew close during a difficult childhood in which Linda Jo (with Rod below) always put their needs first.*





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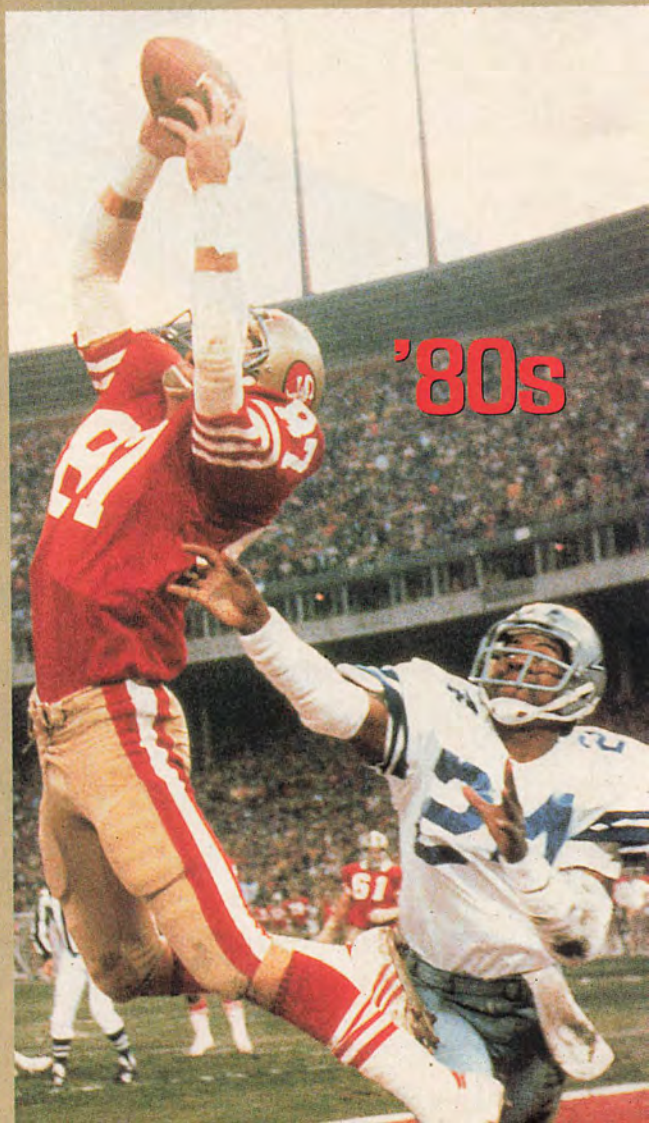


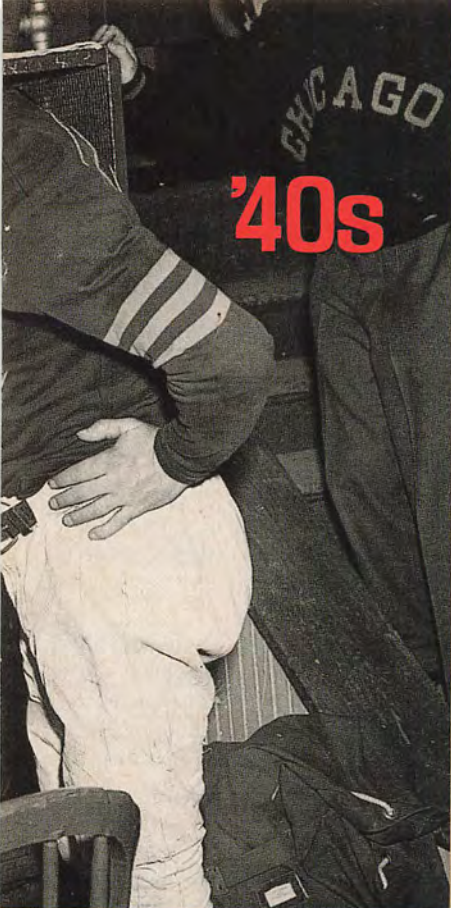
'92 | nfl preview

The Team of the '90s?

*With every decade
comes a new NFL
powerhouse, and the
youthful Dallas Cowboys
are primed to put
their brand on the last 10
years of the century*

BY PAUL ZIMMERMAN





'40s



'50s



'70s



'60s

Sid Luckman got a buss and the game ball after the Bears won the '46 title; the '50s were (mostly) happy days for Brown and his Browns; Jim Taylor powered the Pack in the '60s; John Stallworth and the Steelers caught fire in the '70s; in the '80s it was the 49ers, and Dwight Clark, who soared.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: AP, UPI/BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS, WALTER IOOSS JR. (3)

It's one of those things that have been clearly defined for the last 50 years of pro football: Team of the Decade. The Chicago Bears in the 1940s, the Cleveland Browns in the '50s, the Green Bay Packers in the '60s, the Pittsburgh Steelers in the '70s, the San Francisco 49ers in the '80s—five teams that rose up and grabbed a 10-year chunk of history by

the throat. And now, three ticks into the '90s, it's time to make a call: Which team will define this decade?

The New York Giants and the Washington Redskins each have a leg up with one Super Bowl victory, but somehow we just can't see either of them dominating this 10-year span. The Giants are an aging team, in the down cycle. The Skins? Consistently good, as they were in the '80s, but also showing some age. The Buffalo Bills? The Niners again? The Detroit Lions? Uh-uh.

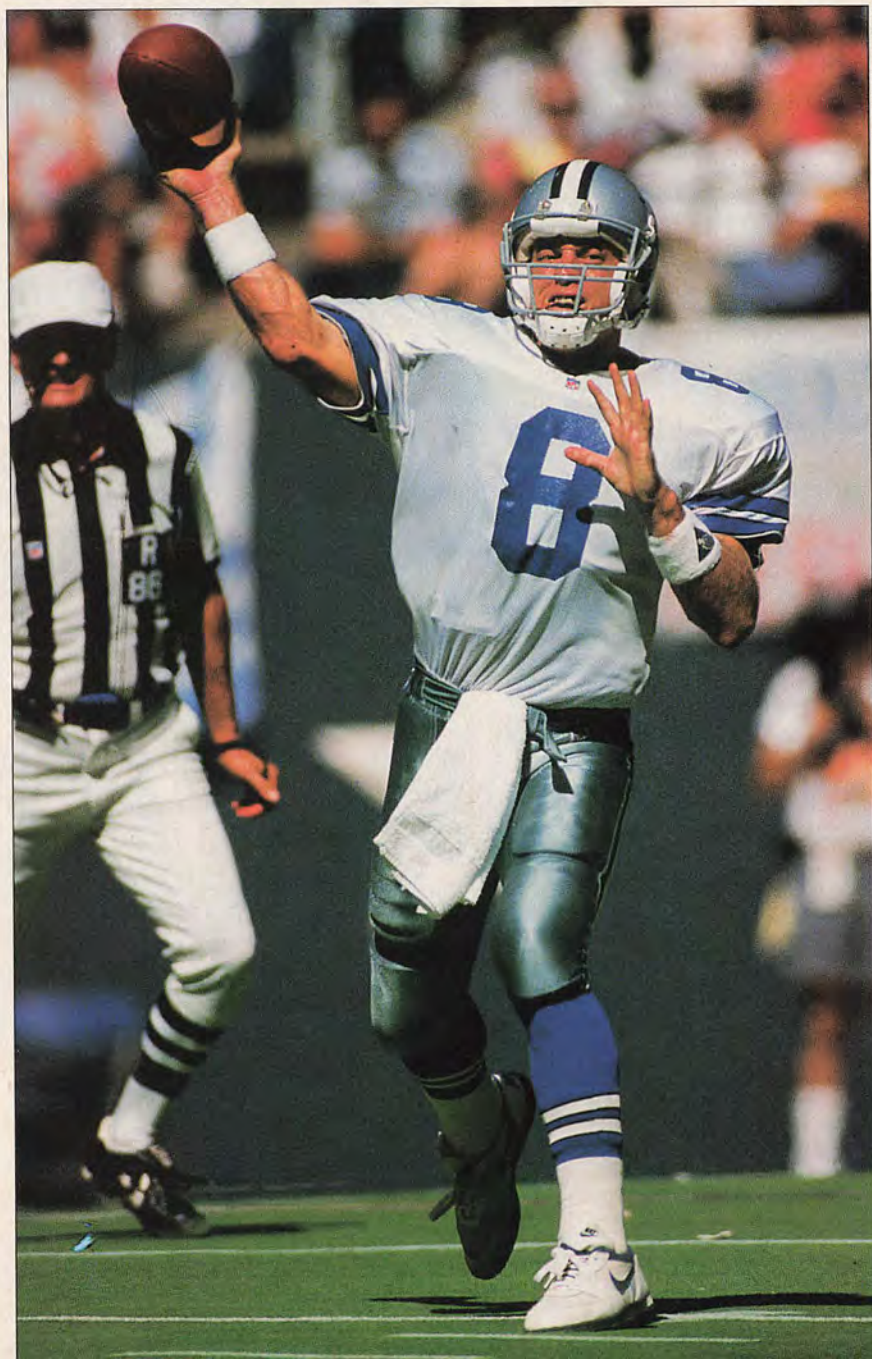
The team of the '90s will be the Dallas Cowboys. Yes, those same Cowboys who were scorned three years ago when a pair of JJs—owner Jerry Jones and coach Jimmy Johnson—arrived to plot the team's destiny and then christened the new era with a 1-15 record. The same Cowboys who saw their mighty empire sink into the mire of five straight losing seasons before they finally reached the playoffs last year. Those Cowboys.

The main reason we like them is a basic one: youth—the fire of youth, young legs in December and January, when the long season has taken its toll and the injuries are mounting. The 16-game NFL regular season has turned the game into an endurance contest.

"I didn't really have a timetable when I got here in 1989," Johnson says, "but I had a commitment to use every avenue to upgrade the talent, even if it meant sacrificing a win or two. The draft, Plan B, waivers, trades—I was going to search all the ways until I found the right players to suit our style. We traded Herschel Walker, our only Pro Bowl player for the two previous seasons, for three years' worth of high draft picks. Ray Alexander had been the team's leading receiver the year before, but we released him to look at younger players. The media made jokes about all the changes our first couple of years. There was no continuity, because I kept a revolving door with players: claim some off waivers, cut three or four the next day, claim three or four a day later. If we were concerned about respectability that first year, we would have kept Walker, kept Alexander and tried to win two or three extra games. But that wasn't going to get us to the Super Bowl."

The memory of that 1-15 first season is a nightmare for Johnson, the same kind of thing Chuck Noll lived through in his rookie year (1-13), before Pittsburgh made its move; the same thing Bill Walsh experienced in his first season (2-14), before the Niners got good.

"We couldn't play with anybody," says free safety Ray Horton, 32, one of the few players who have been around for the en-



JOHN W. McDONOUGH

■ *The Cowboy rebuilding job started with the drafting of Aikman in 1989.*

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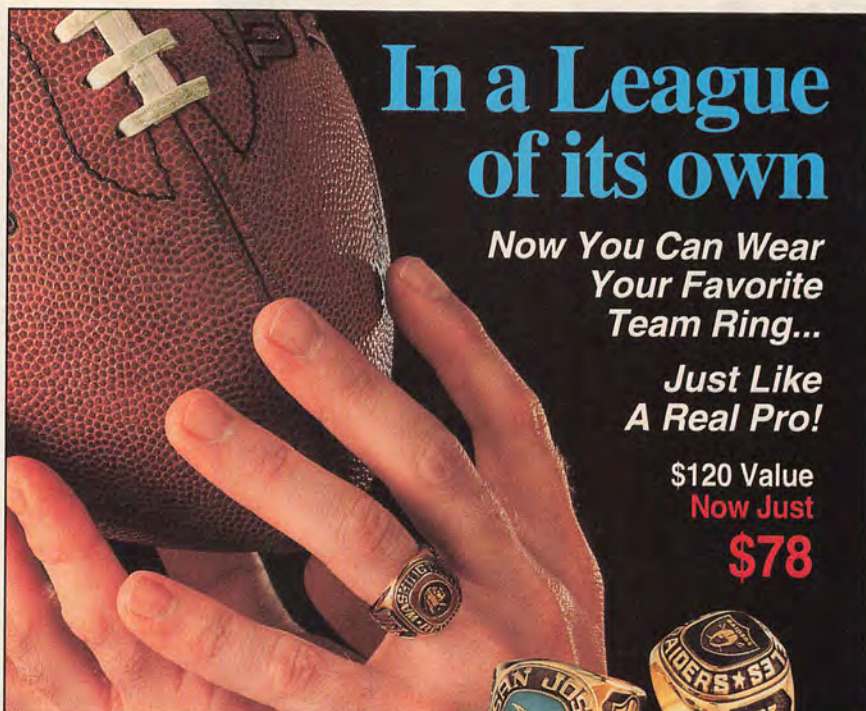
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MITCHELL LANTON

■ *Maryland's a big part of the fallout from the Walker deal.*

tire Jones-Johnson era, "and we probably couldn't coach with anybody. But the coaches adjusted. They learned the pro game."

Before the 1940 season George Halas looked at his Chicago Bear team, and he saw creeping old age. So he infused the squad with new blood, starting the season with 11 rookies and eight second-year players on his 33-man roster. The average age of his team was 25 years; average experience was 3.1 seasons. It was one of the youngest teams ever to win an NFL championship,

which the Bears did most resoundingly—73-0 over the Redskins—even with four rookies in the starting lineup. Gone were 20 players from the 1937 team, the last Chicago team that had played in the title game. Halas's young Bears went on to win four championships in the '40s.

In the 1950s Detroit won as many titles as Cleveland did (three), but the Browns were in the title game another four times to the Lions' one, which gives them the nod. The Browns were a maturing team when they made their NFL debut in 1950, seasoned by four years of dominance in the old All-America Football Conference. But when Paul Brown was putting together his first AAFC club, in 1946, he grabbed 25 players with no professional experience—collegians he had coached at Ohio State and guys he remembered from his service days at Great Lakes Naval Training Station. Brown knew what he was doing, and that bunch formed the nucleus of a 15-year powerhouse.

Vince Lombardi's formula in Green Bay was different. He inherited a 1-10 team that had been disorganized under predecessor Scooter McLean but was heavy in young talent. Seven members of that team eventually made the Hall of Fame. It was up to Lombardi to get them going in the right direction. The Packers had a winning season in Lombardi's first year (1959), a championship loss to the Philadelphia Eagles a year later and then, a year after that, the first of their five titles in the '60s.

The draft did it for Noll in Pittsburgh. Five future Hall of Famers came out of his first four drafts, and then in 1974, his sixth year as coach, came the greatest rookie crop for one team in history: Lynn Swann, John Stallworth, Jack Lambert, Mike Webster, Donnie Shell. Four Super Bowl victories in six years was the result.

In 1981, his third year in San Francisco, Walsh set the stage for the Niners' four Super Bowl wins in the '80s. He went to work on the area of greatest need—defense—and drafted three defensive backs in the first three rounds, all of whom started and eventually made the Pro Bowl. When he fortified the defense by acquiring two sturdy old pros, Fred Dean and Jack Reynolds, Walsh was on his way. And the franchise stayed on top by consistently drafting well throughout the decade.

And now the Cowboys appear ready to claim a decade as their

Will the Pattern Continue?

IN 1959 VINCE LOMBARDI WAS hired to coach the Green Bay Packers, and he led them to the NFL championship five times during the 1960s. In 1969 the Pittsburgh Steelers hired Chuck Noll, and they won four Super Bowls under his direction in the '70s. In 1979 Bill Walsh took over the 49ers and won three Super Bowls in the '80s; he resigned after the 1988 season, but the team he built repeated as NFL champion the following season.

All of which leads to the fact that Jimmy Johnson replaced Tom Landry as coach of the Cowboys in 1989, and, eerily, he is on the same path as the master

coaches of the past three decades. He's in the midst of transforming a downtrodden team into potentially the dominant club of the '90s.

Here is a comparison of the turnarounds of these four teams, all of which were achieved within four seasons of the hiring of the coach.

PACKERS	STEELERS	49ERS	COWBOYS
1958 1-10-1 Lombardi Hired	1968 2-11-1 Noll Hired	1978 2-14 Walsh Hired	1988 3-13 Johnson Hired
1959 7-5	1969 1-13	1979 2-14	1989 1-15
1960 8-4*	1970 5-9	1980 6-10	1990 7-9
1961 11-3*	1971 6-8	1981 13-3*	1991 11-5*
1962 13-1*	1972 11-3*	1982 3-6†	1992 ?
NFL championship seasons			
1961, '62, '65, '66, '67	1974, '75, '78, '79	1981, '84 '88, '89††	

*Reached playoffs. †Strike-shortened season. ††Team coached by George Seifert.

own. The teams of the decade have had one thing in common: an All-Pro or future All-Pro quarterback already in place when they launched their run. Johnson's first draft choice in Dallas was Troy Aikman, who has already appeared in the Pro Bowl. A key-note running back was another constant. In his second year Johnson used a first pick for Emmitt Smith, who is a two-time Pro Bowl player and was the NFL's leading rusher last season.

Almost a compulsive trader, Johnson arms himself with high-round picks and uses them to deal his way up and down the board on draft day. By trading into the No. 1 spot 48 hours before the '91 draft, he landed defensive tackle Russell Maryland, who came on late last season as an inside pass rusher. Maybe he'll emerge as a real force. The Cowboys say that cornerback Kevin Smith, a first-round pick in '92, will be a terrific man-to-man cover guy. Clayton Holmes is a rookie defensive back with 4.23 speed, Darren Woodson is an oversized, 216-pound safety who can also motor, and then there are sleepers like 6' 7" tight end Fallon Wacasey, a sixth-round pick in April, who blocked like a maniac in Tulsa's Freedom Bowl win over San Diego State. And they're all connected in some way to the Walker deal.

Last December, when Dallas took its young Turks to Chicago for the first playoff game in the Jones-Johnson era, it was a case of young legs versus old. The Cowboys wore down the Bears, putting together a nifty goal-line stand in the course of that 17-13 victory. "Five rookies were on the field for us during that goal-line stand," defensive coordinator Dave Wannstedt says.

But the season ended with a 38-6 loss to the Lions, who exposed the Cowboys' Achilles' heel. Teams that tried to pound the ball against Dallas had problems. But spread them out and throw on them and the Cowboys were in trouble. Their game plan against Detroit's run-and-shoot was to key on Barry Sanders's running, so Lion quarterback Erik Kramer stood back in the pocket and picked them to pieces. "I kept saying to myself, 'They're going to run it on the next play, they're going to run it,'" Wannstedt says. "Pretty soon someone said to me, 'Hey, we're down by 25 points with 10 minutes left.'"

The Cowboys played every run-and-shoot team last year and lost three out of the four games. "Our cover guys were basically zone-type players," Wannstedt says. "We had only 23 sacks from our pass rush. It locked us into a certain type of coverage, and when you're playing against a wide-open offense, that's not good. Things will be different this year."

Dallas drafted for need in April, making the selections a team makes when it's thinking seriously about a run at the Big One. Four of the first five picks were for defense, including three defensive backs, and the Cowboys' second first-rounder, Robert Jones, a 236-pounder with 4.63

speed, has already been plugged into the starting lineup at middle linebacker. The defensive line, fortified by the trade for 49er pass-rush specialist Charles Haley, is deeper than it has been. And an interesting down-the-line project is end Chad Hennings, who spent the last four years in the Air Force. "Relentless," Johnson says. "We'll be alternating defensive linemen the whole game, making sure there are always fresh legs." Just as the 49ers have done for the last decade—with exceptional results.

"Are we going to make a run for it in '92? You bet we are," says Jones, the owner. "We could have traded backup quarterback Steve Beuerlein for a No. 1 pick this year or a very skilled veteran [Kansas City Chief cornerback Albert Lewis], but we turned the deals down. He stepped in and won five games for us last year. His contract is up after this season, and we could lose him in the future, but we want him in place right now."

"We're young and we're hungry, and we're developing an attitude," Wannstedt says. "But I know that we've got to go out and win a lot more games on defense than we did in the past."

The rookies were all signed when camp opened. There were some veteran holdouts, but who doesn't have them these days? Under Jones the Cowboys have had a reputation for being free spenders, but lately they have economized in strange ways. They pared their scouting department way down, and the director of college scouting, Dick Mansperger, quit when raises were frozen. Bob Ackles, the player personnel director, was let go in another financial move.

But the system is in place, and the Cowboys are young all around. They'll learn. Just watch; you'll see. ■

PHIL HUBER



■ *With a total of 2,500 rushing yards, Smith has already had a great decade.*

NFC east

Dr. Z's Scouting Report

IT'S VERY IFFY, PICKING THE DALLAS COWBOYS to go to the Super Bowl. Football people I talk to say, "Not yet, they're still a year away." But I would rather be a year early than a year late, and I can picture what the Cowboys will be like in January—younger, fresher, more juiced up than the teams they'll have to meet.

The start of the season could be trying indeed, with a lot of young, inexperienced players sorting things out against the likes of the Redskins and the Giants. But those are the teams the Cowboys like to play: big, physical clubs that test their manhood. It's the fly-boys who give them trouble, the run-and-shoot teams. Last year Dallas lost three of its four games against run-and-shoot teams, and this season the Cowboys meet two of them, the Lions and the Falcons, in the regular season.

The Cowboys are so dedicated to the concept of youth that they had their first five draft choices agreeing to contracts by the end of draft day. Owner Jerry Jones sees this as a logical way to do business: Pick guys you're sure you can sign. Other teams saw it as a bending of the rules, talking contract with players before they were selected. At any rate, all nine guys picked in the first five rounds were ready to go when camp opened.

The negatives on this team? All the stars seem to be on one side of the ball: quarterback Troy Aikman; Emmitt Smith, the NFL's leading rusher in 1991; wideout Michael Irvin, whose 93-catch, 1,523-yard season produced a dandy holdout that was still going on as of Monday. A defensive star still has to emerge, a guy the players can rally round. Maybe the Cowboys' newest pass rusher, Charles

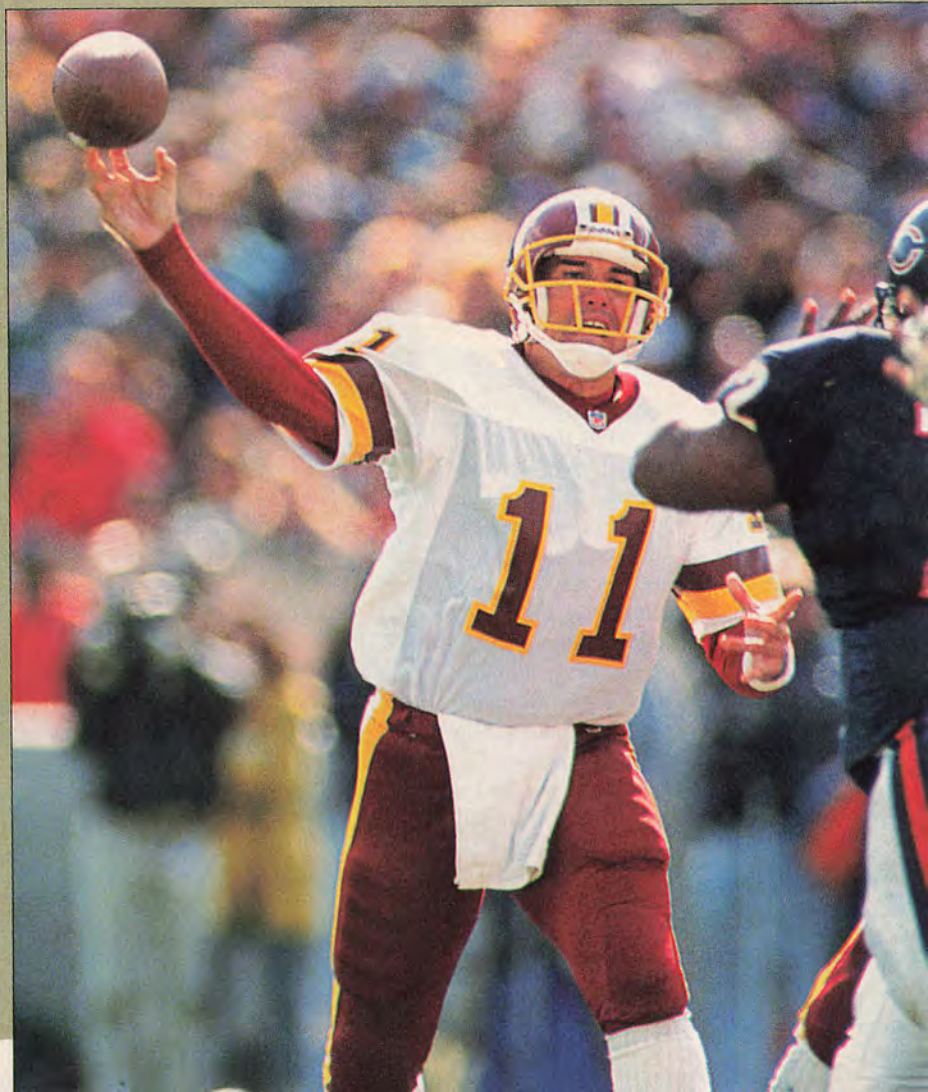
Haley, who arrived via a trade with San Francisco, will be the guy.

Holdouts follow Super Bowl championships like a dog on a leash, but on Aug. 25, when the **Washington Redskins** announced that they had signed their last

three, first-round pick Desmond Howard and All-Pros Jim Lachey and Darrell Green, all the pieces were in place. Each area of the offense and defense has at least one Pro Bowl performer to lead it. There are no weak links.

Coach Joe Gibbs's offense is multi-dimensional. If you can't stop Washington's power running, you'll see it all day. If you do stop it, then the Skins will come at you with a burst, out of their three-wideout package. Mark Rypien is one of the few quarterbacks who can throw deep with touch. The attack will have even more explosion now, thanks to Howard, the Heisman Trophy-winning wideout, and a mature Ricky Ervins, last year's flashy rookie running back.

The defense ranked third in the league in '91, and linebacker Wilber Marshall lived up to the reputation he built when he was with Chicago. Charley Casserly is one of the league's best general managers, and owner Jack Kent Cooke isn't afraid to spend money. So why don't I pick them to repeat as Super Bowl



champs? One reason: Eight of Washington's 11 offensive starters will be 30 or older in December, as will four starters on defense. There's a nagging feeling that this team has already peaked and is about to begin a slow decline.

Memories of the late Jerome Brown: The night before the **Philadelphia Eagles** met the Redskins in the 1990 playoffs, after the team doctor had already told Brown that his separated shoulder would definitely keep him out of the game, he was up in coach Buddy Ryan's room, begging Ryan to let him line up. Buddy gave in. Brown played with one arm at his side, and he still burst into the backfield to disrupt the action.

The Eagles have dedicated this season to Brown, who was killed in an auto accident this summer. Though the defense will play with great emotion, it probably won't be as good as it was last year—you just don't replace a tackle like Brown. Nonetheless, it should be plenty tough.

And now that quarterback Randall

Cunningham is back from knee surgery, some people are predicting Super Bowl for the Eagles, but I don't see it. Even with everybody in place, they haven't won a playoff game. And a weakness they've had for years still plagues them: The offensive line isn't sound enough.

O.K., the line might be better now, and Herschel Walker might—repeat, might—give Philly the burst out of the backfield it has lacked for so long. But the team

NFC East Forecast

1. DALLAS	10 - 6
2. WASHINGTON	10 - 6
3. PHILADELPHIA	9 - 7
4. N.Y. GIANTS	8 - 8
5. PHOENIX	4 - 12

remains lopsided in the defense-offense equation. One area that should improve is punt and kick returns, which will be handled by Vai Sikahema, a Plan B pickup from Green Bay.

That **New York Giants** quarterback thing just won't go away, will it? It appeared to be settled last year, when new coach Ray Handley selected Jeff Hostetler to be the starter over Phil Simms, but in the third preseason game this summer, against the Jets, Hostetler went down with a bruised back and pelvis.

In came Simms, who put two quick touchdowns on the board against the Jets' second string. It was quickly noted that in the 12 possessions Hostetler had worked before he was injured, the Giants' point production was zero and that last year Hostetler threw only five TD passes, three fewer than Simms did with half as many throws. And people are telling Handley to face facts: He made a mistake in benching Simms for Hostetler.

But explaining last season's 8-8 finish is not that simple, folks. New York's fall from grace was more of a defensive collapse—poor tackling, an aging Lawrence Taylor, the early-season loss of noseguard Erik Howard to a back injury. That last one was bad. When Howard wasn't in there driving people back into the quarterback's face, quarterbacks could step up in the pocket and throw downfield against the Giants.

In 1990, New York's Super Bowl season, the Giants allowed the fewest yards per completion in the league. Last year they ranked 21st. Long passes killed them. But so did the fourth quarter, when the defense was tiring and the offense couldn't get anything going. No other team gave up as many points in the final period. Only two scored fewer.

Handley was strapped in '91. When Bill Parcells left in May, it was too late to change much of anything. This year it will be Handley's system and his people, including new offensive and defensive coordinators. But who's the quarterback?

The **Phoenix Cardinals** are bound to improve, now that quarterback Timm Rosenbach has returned from knee surgery, which forced him to miss last season. How much better will they be? When the Cards had Rosenbach in '90, they finished 5-11; without him, they were 4-12.

Clearly Phoenix is hurting in other areas, and you don't have to look much further than the running game to find two. Last year Phoenix ranked 26th in the league in rushing and 26th in stopping the rush, and in the infantry warfare of the NFC East, that's curtains. So even if the Cards are a better team with Rosenbach in the lineup, they must figure a way to compete with their division rivals, who have gone 13-3 against Phoenix since coach Joe Bugel's arrival two years ago.

Fortunes rise and fall in the East. Dallas recedes, the Giants and Eagles surge. Then those two slip, and Washington takes over. Now all four of them are play-off-caliber teams, while the Cardinals remain constant—doormats. They haven't had a winning team since '84, and unless you count the strike year of '82, when they were 5-4, they haven't had a playoff team since the Don Coryell era of the 1970s.

All of which says something about the personnel who've been coming through the door all these years, not to mention the personnel director, George Boone, who was fired after last season. The new man is Bob Ackles, who came from Dallas, and that's a beginning.

It must be galling to Bugel, who coached the Hogs in Washington for so many years, that his primary need is help on the offensive line. Then there's the defense, which spends a lot of time getting hammered. It's a long road back. ■

■ Rypien gets plenty of time to throw, and in Howard he has another top target.



DAMIAN STROMMEYER

NFC Central

Dr. Z's Scouting Report

WHEN THE CHICAGO BEARS PLAYED THE Steelers in the preseason, a pair of Chicago rookies were impressive: defensive tackle Alonzo Spellman, their first-round pick, who's an agile, relentless pursuit guy; and offensive tackle Troy Auzenne, a second-rounder, who seemed to plug into Chicago's mobile line. Then in the fourth quarter another rookie popped my eyes open, a terrifying guy who blotted out the moon: 6' 7", 350-pound Louis Age, offensive tackle, 11th-round choice. On his pass blocks he was heaving guys right off the TV screen.

The Bears always draft low, but they always get guys who can help them. Bill Tobin, their player personnel director, might be the best in the business. If Spellman and Auzenne both become starters, which is likely, Tobin's draft record will be 17 first-stringers out of a total of 22 players selected in the first and second rounds since he took the job in 1984. That is the main reason that Chicago has been in the playoffs for seven of the last eight years, a record matched only by the 49ers.

But Tobin's talent machine will be put to the test in the next few years because Chicago is showing some age. Nine players who started in last year's playoff loss to the Cowboys are now 30 or older—not a disastrous figure, but it's getting up there.

Two weeks into the preseason, coach Mike Ditka said this Bear team was better than his 1985 Super Bowl champions at the same stage of the campaign. That was after he had threatened to resume two-a-days because he was unhappy with the way practices were going, and during a period in which he expressed his unhappiness that star running back Neal Ander-

son had not spent enough time rehabilitating his injured hamstring at the team's training facility in the off-season. Seems that Mike is playing both good cop and bad cop these days. So what else is new? His system is time-tested. Chicago will be right up there again, ready to take the division title away from Detroit.

Everyone is still trying to figure out how the **Detroit Lions** came from nowhere to win the NFC Central. The easy explanation is that they sneaked up on teams, caught them unawares. Here's another theory: defense. Statistically the Lions' D was last in the NFL in 1990, but right around the middle of the pack last season, when it gave up almost 700 fewer yards than the year before while the offense was gaining nearly 200 fewer.

Defensive coordinator Woody Widenhofer's crew was bustling and aggressive. They intimidated people, made things

in the NFC Championship Game, Detroit coach Wayne Fontes said of the Redskins offensive players, "They were just too big, too strong." Ten days later he hired Dan Henning, who had spent four years helping to run that big, strong Washington system, to put some more thump into the Lion offense.

Which means that Detroit's run-and-shoot, the Silver Streak, will now show more tight-end alignments, which means another blocker or two for Barry Sanders, who makes the whole thing go. The offensive line is still in disarray, following the off-season death of left guard Eric Andolsek, a tragic aftermath to the loss of right guard Mike Utley, who was paralyzed by an injury late last season.

Keeping the pass rushers away from quarterback Rodney Peete will be a major project. The Lions were 5-2 when he ruptured his Achilles tendon last season. Then they got lucky with Erik Kramer, who stepped in and was better than anyone expected. He led Detroit to seven wins and then turned in a magnificent playoff performance against Dallas.

The Lions should be solid, but the days of sneaking up on people are over.

Herschel Walker was unloaded in May, and thus ended the final chapter of one of the most one-sided trades in league history. But you have to understand the real reason that the **Minnesota Vikings** gave Dallas all those high draft choices and players for Walker, and why the ordeal really isn't over for the Vikings. Former Minnesota general manager Mike Lynn was a bottom-line guy with a financial stake in the club. The trade was a money-saver: Pay one big salary and then for three years you don't have to worry about all those costly signing packages for first- and second-round picks.

Into this scene, stripped of three years' worth of high draft picks (except for the 1992 second-round choice the Vikings got from Seattle for Keith Millard), steps new coach Dennis Green—a butt-kicker, they say, a shake-'em-up guy. Minnesota exploded out of the box, winning all four of its preseason games by a combined score of 140-6. Seems that Green was trying to prove something early.

NFC Central Forecast

1. CHICAGO	11 - 5
2. DETROIT	9 - 7
3. MINNESOTA	8 - 8
4. TAMPA BAY	5 - 11
5. GREEN BAY	4 - 12

happen. Three Detroit defensive players were chosen for the Pro Bowl—nose-tackle Jerry Ball, free safety Bennie Blades and inside linebacker Chris Spielman—the Lions' heaviest representation since the Alex Karras teams of the 1960s. Yet after Washington pounded the Lions



HEINZ KLUETMEIER

■ *With Ditka on his case, Anderson (35) has added incentive to prove that his injury-plagued '91 season was a fluke.*

He has got enough quality people to put points on the board—halfback Terry Allen, wideout Anthony Carter, tight end Steve Jordan—but the defense is aging. The best-known names, end Chris Doleman, cornerback Carl Lee and linebacker Mike Merriweather, are all older than 30.

Vinny Testaverde is working with his third head coach and fifth quarterback coach in six seasons with the **Tampa Bay Bucs**. The guy's head must be filled with a jumble of X's and O's. He hears all those voices in his sleep: "Air it out." "Tighten it up." "Control the ball." "Stretch the defense." Now he's running Sam Wyche's quick-huddle, attack offense. Will the two of them be on the same page, in the same book, on the same planet?

Once you get past that question, there are many upbeat things about the new marriage of Wyche, the former coach of the Bengals, and the Bucs. The community loves him. He made more than 90 luncheon and charity-event appearances in

his first 100 days in Tampa. The black players must have noticed that he has five black assistants. Management loosened the purse strings and let him bring in 10 players on Plan B, most noticeably guard Bruce Reimers.

The defense, under holdover coordinator Floyd Peters, is better than the one Wyche had in Cincinnati, thanks to guys like tackle Reuben Davis, end Keith McCants and linebacker Broderick Thomas. The schedule is kind, with the first two games, against Phoenix and Green Bay, both winnable and at home.

The **Green Bay Packers'** new general manager, Ron Wolf, is a solid football man. Their rookie coach, Mike Holmgren, was a brilliant offensive coordinator for San Francisco. To them we can say, Buckle up, gentlemen. Keep your chin straps fastened. It's going to be rough for a while.

Training camp was a mess of injuries and holdouts, with the most significant

absentee being first-round draft pick Terrell Buckley, a cornerback who has already demanded to be traded and has signed a minor league contract with the Atlanta Braves.

Quarterback Don Majkowski, the wonder boy of 1989, has been injured repeatedly behind a decaying offensive line. Holmgren has shortened Majkowski's drop and has him throwing on rhythm, 49er style, to keep him away from the horns of the rush.

Green Bay has to run the ball, Holmgren says, but the only back he has is sturdy, but not speedy, Darrell Thompson, who finished 36th among NFL ballcarriers with 471 yards last year. The defense, when healthy, could be O.K. Keep an eye on linebacker George Koonce, a World League pickup, who was the leading tackler in the spring league.

The season opens with four games against teams run by new coaches, some of whom have rebuilding tasks as formidable as Holmgren's. ■

NFC West

Dr. Z's Scouting Report

LET'S SET UP TWO SCENARIOS FOR THE **San Francisco 49ers**. In the first one Joe Montana returns early in the season with the most famous elbow since the one Charles Barkley gave the Angolan at the Olympics. Still recovering from surgery to have a tendon reattached to his right elbow, Montana once again has his practice throws carefully monitored. He can't afford a relapse similar to the one he suffered in July when he overworked the arm and it came up sore. With Montana running things, the Niners establish themselves as the class of the NFL. Think Super Bowl. But yet . . . in the back of everyone's mind is that nagging fear: Montana scrambles out of the pocket, corkscrews his body, throws from an awkward position and, oh no, there it goes again.

In the second scenario Montana's arm just refuses to come around, and Steve Young, who will start the season, stays the quarterback. Young had the highest quarterback rating in the league last year, but the Niners lost four of their first six games under him. If they start as badly this year, maybe Steve Bono gets the job. This would make for the liveliest quarterback controversy in football.

Everyone thinks of Bono as a youngster who has just arrived on the scene, but he's 30 and in his eighth NFL season. The Vikings cut him twice. So did the Steelers. But when he arrived in San Francisco three years ago and plugged into the Niners' system, something seemed to click. And when he finally got his chance after Young injured a knee last November, he

went 5-1 as a starter. People were waiting for him to collapse, but he never did. He gave way to Young only after spraining his knee at the end of the season.

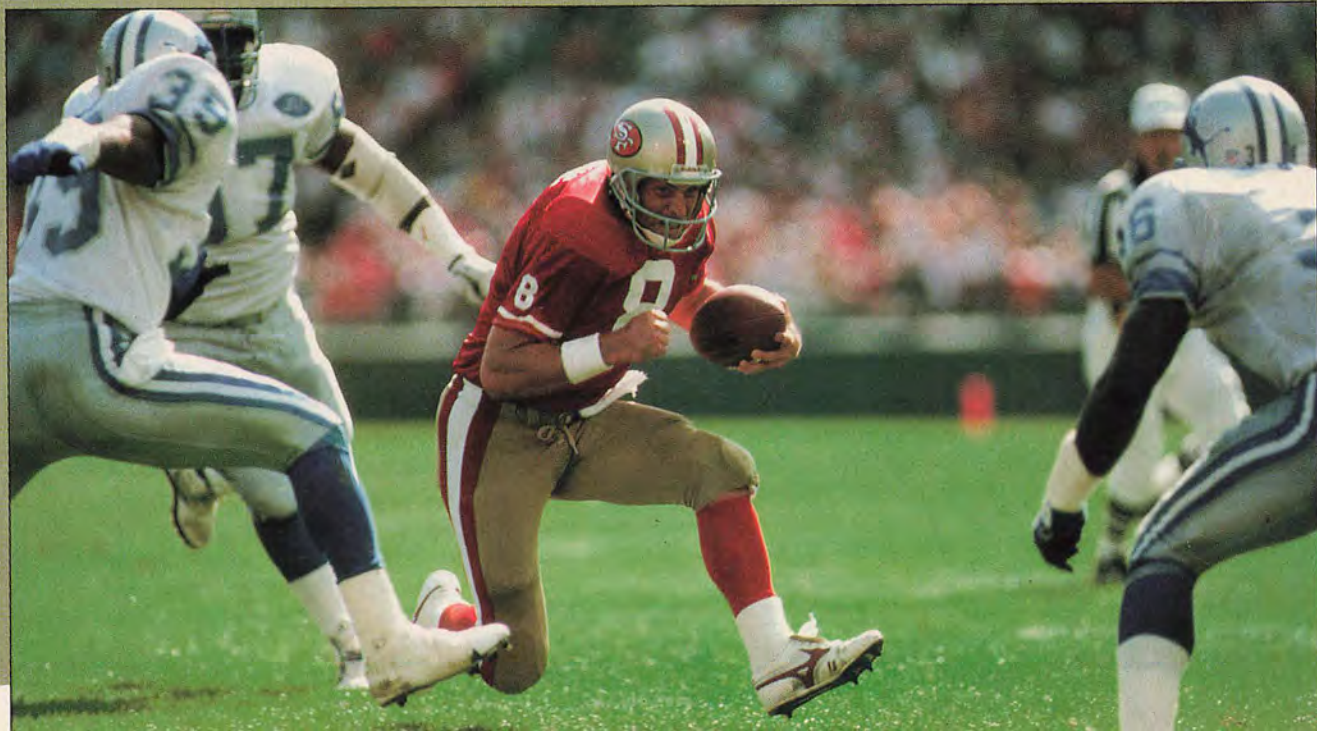
With six straight wins, the Niners closed out 1991 as the NFL's hottest team. A Hail Mary in Atlanta cost them a spot in the playoffs, in which they surely would have raised some hell. Now there's hardly an area in which they're not better than they were last year.

First-round pick Dana Hall gives them more speed at free safety. Tim Harris, the pass-rush specialist they got from Green Bay last September, is down 20 pounds from last year and says he's ready to make things happen. The defense has always been good under George Seifert, who was the coordinator for six years before taking the head job. A healthy Ricky Watters and second-round pick Amp Lee upgrade the running game. The new offensive coordinator, Mike Shanahan, knows not to tinker with an attack that has been so successful for so long, and if Montana is back, then it will be his offense anyway.

I'll be shocked if the 49ers aren't in the thick of the Super Bowl hunt.

In the off-season all you heard was that the **Atlanta Falcons** were building a speed machine specifically for their new home in the Georgia Dome. Yeah, maybe, but

■ *Young's passing stats were impressive last season, but the Niners still had to scramble to win when he was at quarterback.*



MIKEY PLEGER

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the artificial turf makes the other team faster, too, doesn't it? It's all relative. The thing nobody has talked about is what the carpet will do for the Falcons' defense.

That defense is small. When the Falcons opened against Kansas City last year, Chief fullback Christian Okoye outweighed 10 of the 11 Atlanta defensive starters. But hustling, undersized defenses perform better on artificial turf because they can get to the ball quicker than the heavy plodders.

Still you ask, What happens if the other team goes deep on them and the fastest defensive guy they've got, cornerback Deion Sanders, is off playing centerfield for the Braves? It could be a problem. The worst thing from the Falcons' standpoint is that Sanders is a .300 hitter now, and the Braves could be in the World Series, and the Falcons open with four straight '91 playoff teams. Baseball already cost the Falcons their fine young strong safety, Brian Jordan, who signed a baseball-exclusive contract with the St. Louis Cardinals this summer. Atlanta vice-president of player personnel Ken Herock was shopping holdout wide receiver Andre Rison last week, trying to land a first-rate corner.

Look for a lot of 42-35 shoot-outs in the Georgia Dome this year. Quarterback Chris Miller loves to go long. Plan B pickup Drew Hill, Michael Haynes and Mike Pritchard are quality wideouts who like to

go long, too. Last year the Falcons won four games on their final possession; they lived on the edge, to use a favorite Glanville expression. One more loss and they would have been out of the playoffs. It's a risky way to travel.

The New Orleans Saints were the monsters of the South for the first 10 games of last season, a 9-1 team with a defense that

NFC West Forecast

1. SAN FRANCISCO	13-3
2. ATLANTA	8-8
3. NEW ORLEANS	7-9
4. L.A. RAMS	6-10

was running away with the NFL sack title and that trailed mighty Philadelphia in total yards allowed by only 31 yards. Then bad things started happening. Four straight losses, four leads blown in the fourth quarter. New Orleans gave up a total of 21 fourth-quarter points in its first 10 games and then yielded 51 in the fourth quarter of the next four.

The sack machine was sputtering. The offense, with Steve Walsh replacing injured quarterback Bobby Hebert (bruised shoulder, concussion), couldn't get the ball in the end zone when it had to. The team looked tired.

The Saints pulled themselves together and beat the Raiders and the Cardinals to win the division. But in the playoffs they lost to Atlanta after blowing another fourth-quarter lead. When you end up in first place, you inherit a first-place schedule, and the Saints are facing the schedule from hell. In their first five games they play teams that won 10 or more games last season; they go to Philadelphia, Atlanta and Detroit, play Chicago and San Francisco at home. In November, New Orleans returns from a trip to San Francisco to play three games in 11 days, against the Redskins, the Dolphins and the Falcons. The Saints finish up with Buffalo and then the Jets on the road six days later.

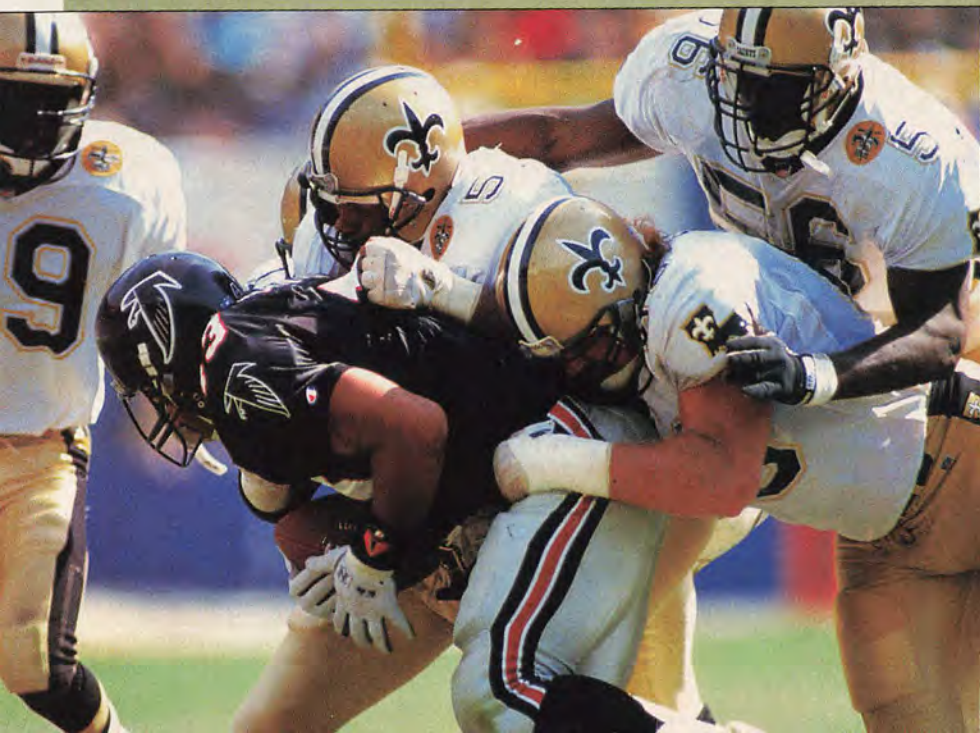
The Saints' big news in the off-season was the three-year, \$5,475,000 contract that they gave NFL sack leader Pat Swilling, matching an offer sheet Detroit tendered him. Swilling and fellow linebacker Rickey Jackson form the heart of the team. It's up to the defense to force fumbles and interceptions, setting up an offense that can grind people but loses the shoot-outs.

"Every coach would like to go into someplace where he's playing a pat hand," says Chuck Knox, the Los Angeles Rams' new coach, "but those aren't the jobs that open up. I've been through this before." Three times, in fact—with the Rams in the early '70s, then with the Bills and the Seahawks. Franchise broken? Call Chuck. Now, at 60, he has to fix a team that has been steadily declining. It's hard to believe that three seasons ago L.A. played San Francisco for the NFC title.

The first thing Knox noticed was that the Rams tried to play a pressure-type defense last year, but the only pressure they generated was on their own defensive backs because their 17 sacks were a league low. So in the first round he drafted the biggest hunk of pass rusher he could, 315-pound Sean Gilbert, who didn't disappoint anybody in the preseason. Then Knox moved Kevin Greene back outside to his familiar rush-linebacker spot. As an end last season Greene dropped from 13 sacks in '90 to three.

Jim Everett, "the most talented quarterback I've ever coached," Knox says, has been in a two-year slump, so Knox brought in veteran offensive coach Ted Tollner to work with him. The Rams will be fixed, but it'll take a while.

■ The Saints need this kind of defensive effort to last all four quarters.



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- ☐ 6178 **Blood, Sweat & Tears**, You've Made Me So Very Happy
- ☐ 3541 **Blues Magoos**, (We Ain't Got) Nothin' Yet
- ☐ 2855 **Booker T. & the MG's**, Green Onions
- ☐ 3506 **James Brown**, I Got You
- ☐ 6049 **The Byrds**, Turn, Turn, Turn
- ☐ 1327 **Glen Campbell**, Gentle on My Mind
- ☐ 4299 **The Cascades**, Rhythm of the Rain
- ☐ 5101 **Johnny Cash**, I Walk the Line
- ☐ 5627 **The Champs**, Tequila
- ☐ 2660 **Ray Charles**, What'd I Say
- ☐ 2230 **The Chiffons**, One Fine Day
- ☐ 3509 **Lou Christie**, Lightnin' Strikes
- ☐ 1851 **Petula Clark**, Downtown
- ☐ 2630 **The Coasters**, Yakety Yak
- ☐ 6970 **The Contours**, Do You Love Me
- ☐ 3563 **Mark Dinning**, Teen Angel
- ☐ 3546 **The Diamonds**, Little Darlin'
- ☐ 2201 **Dion**, Runaround Sue
- ☐ 2203 **Dion**, The Wanderer
- ☐ 1575 **Fats Domino**, Blueberry Hill
- ☐ 2669 **The Drifters**, Under the Boardwalk
- ☐ 2666 **The Drifters**, Save the Last Dance for Me
- ☐ 2609 **The Everly Brothers**, Cathy's Clown
- ☐ 6809 **Four Tops**, I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)
- ☐ 2640 **Aretha Franklin**, Respect
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- ☐ 3743 **Tom Jones**, It's Not Unusual
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- ☐ 2654 **Ben E. King**, Stand by Me
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- ☐ 5104 **Jerry Lee Lewis**, Great Balls of Fire
- ☐ 3678 **Clyde McPhatter**, Lover Please
- ☐ 3576 **Roger Miller**, King of the Road
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- ☐ 2651 **Wilson Pickett**, In the Midnight Hour
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- ☐ 3063 **The Rascals**, Good Lovin'
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- ☐ 5419 **Harry Chapin**, Cats in the Cradle
- ☐ 6190 **The Charlie Daniels Band**, The Devil Went Down to Georgia
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- ☐ 6024 **Earth, Wind & Fire**, September
- ☐ 6845 **Marvin Gaye**, Let's Get It On
- ☐ 1568 **Crystal Gayle**, Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue
- ☐ 6858 **Al Green**, Let's Stay Together
- ☐ 6449 **Heart**, Crazy on You
- ☐ 6195 **The Hollies**, Long Cool Woman in a Black Dress
- ☐ 6840 **Jackson 5**, I'll Be There
- ☐ 6017 **Kansas**, Carry on Wayward Son

70's

- ☐ 6173 **Eddie Money**, Two Tickets to Paradise
- ☐ 3568 **Peaches & Herb**, Reunited
- ☐ 4698 **Bonnie Raitt**, Runaway
- ☐ 6856 **Smokey Robinson & the Miracles**, The Tears of a Clown
- ☐ 6843 **Diana Ross and the Supremes**, Ain't No Mountain High Enough
- ☐ 6030 **Santana**, Black Magic Woman
- ☐ 3060 **The Spinners**, Could It Be I'm Falling in Love
- ☐ 3518 **Rod Stewart**, Maggie May
- ☐ 7581 **The Stylistics**, You Make Me Feel Brand New
- ☐ 3606 **Donna Summer**, Bad Girls
- ☐ 2923 **James Taylor**, You've Got a Friend
- ☐ 3000 **Joe Walsh**, Life's Been Good to Me So Far
- ☐ 2699 **Warren Zevon**, Werewolves of London

80's/90's

- ☐ 1867 **Paula Abdul**, Straight Up
- ☐ 3632 **Animation**, Obsession
- ☐ 4636 **Patti Austin**, Baby, Come to Me (with James Ingram)
- ☐ 3306 **Laura Branigan**, Gloria
- ☐ 2901 **Peabo Bryson**, If Ever You're in My Arms Again
- ☐ 6086 **The Clash**, Should I Stay Or Should I Go
- ☐ 5556 **Kim Carnes**, Bette Davis Eyes
- ☐ 3027 **Foreigner**, I Want to Know What Love Is
- ☐ 3805 **Gap Band**, Party Train
- ☐ 6864 **Rick James**, Super Freak
- ☐ 3294 **Howard Jones**, No One Is to Blame
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- ☐ 3597 **Kool & the Gang**, Celebration
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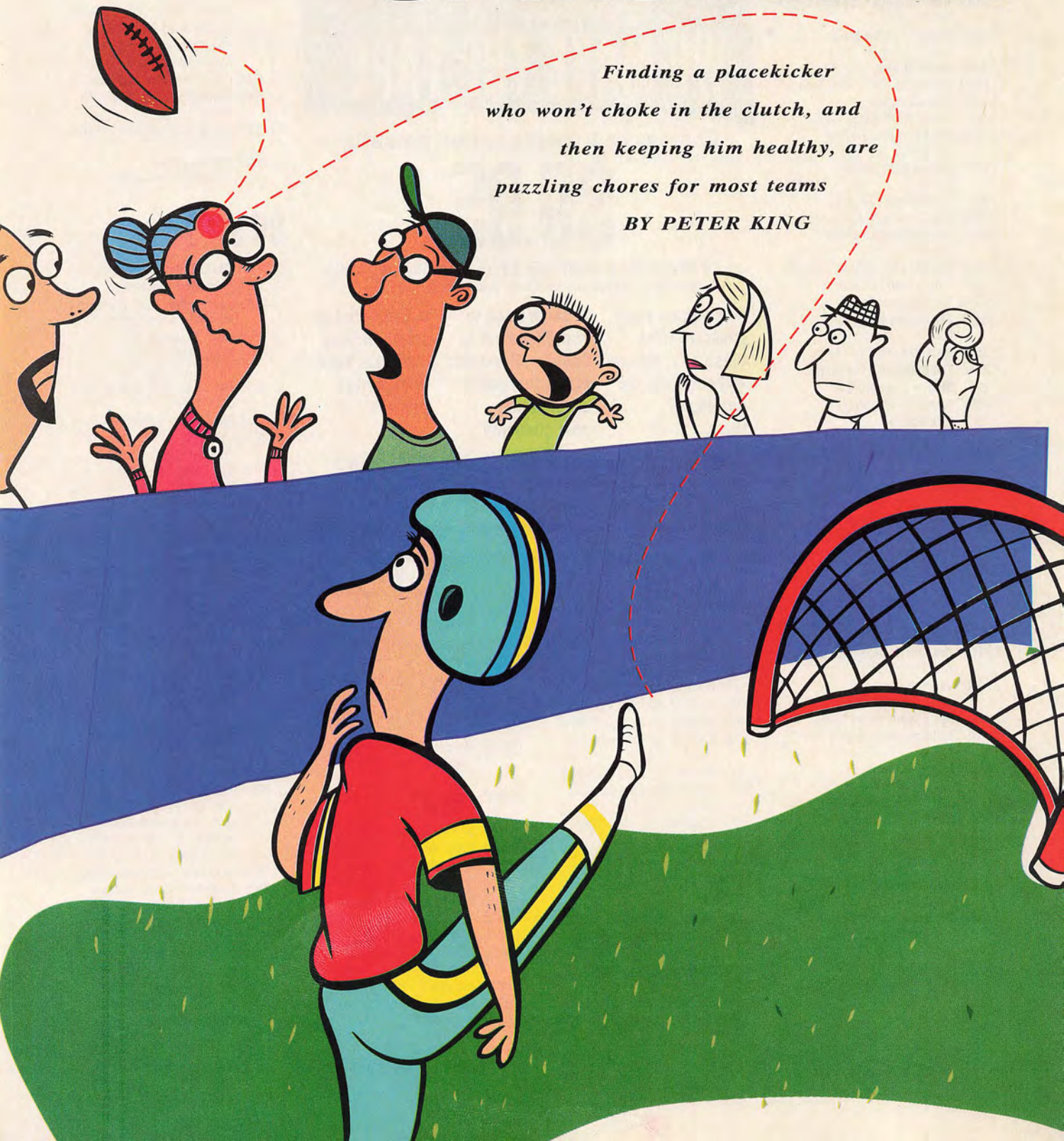
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The Riddle Of the Kicker

*Finding a placekicker
who won't choke in the clutch, and
then keeping him healthy, are
puzzling chores for most teams*

BY PETER KING



IT WAS A TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 1977 SEASON, AND THE Philadelphia Eagles needed a kicker. Player personnel assistant Carl Peterson thought he had found a winner in Ove Johansson, so he fetched coach Dick Vermeil to come watch the Swede try out. Kick after soccer-style kick, the ball boomed off Johansson's right foot, high and deep, 80 yards in the air. "Sign him right now," Vermeil said.

A few days later, on the plane ride to St. Louis for a game against the Cardinals, Johansson walked up to Peterson's seat and told him he didn't see much confidence on the team. Johansson said the Eagles needed some training in the power of positive thinking. Peterson told Johansson to sit down.

That was the first indication Peterson had that signing Johansson, who had kicked for Abilene (Texas) Christian, may have been a mistake. The second indication came during warmups before that Sunday's game, as Peterson watched Johansson kick into the practice net on the sideline. Johansson's first attempt missed the net, hooked terribly and hit a fan in the first row smack in the face. Peterson started to feel woozy.

Then, on the game's opening kickoff, Johansson's boot fluttered only 44 yards. Vermeil shot a dirty look at Peterson. Ten minutes into a scoreless game, Johansson tried his first field goal, from 43 yards, and pulled it so far left that it landed in the corner of the end zone. Now Peterson felt like throwing up.

But wait. Late in the second quarter, after Philly had scored a touchdown, Johansson trotted out for the extra point—and it was blocked! The Eagles lost 21–16, and as Vermeil walked off the field, he went straight for Peterson. "Fire that s.o.b.!" Vermeil said. "I don't even want him on the charter home!"

Pro football—what a science! The NFL's far-reaching scouting network can root out a semipro player in Massachusetts, and the best coaches in the world can turn a Notre Dame quarterback with an ordinary arm into a four-time Super Bowl champion, but nobody can solve the riddle of the placekicker. Kicking remains the most imperfect, maddening and costly variable in the game. Yet with a quarter of the 896 games played in the last four seasons having been decided by three points or fewer, field goals have never been more important.

Last year NFL kickers made good on 73.5% of their field goal tries, the fifth year in a row that kickers converted at least seven of every 10 attempts. That's terrific, when you consider the weather some guys kick in, all the 50-yard-plus attempts and the pressure that goes with the job.

But on any Sunday, particularly late in the game, these guys can be dangerous. On each of two weekends last season, there were four games in which kickers failed to make

field goals that would have won a game or sent it into overtime.

On Sept. 15 the New York Jets, the New York Giants, the San Diego Chargers and the San Francisco 49ers all came up short when their placekickers came up empty. But Nov. 3 was especially horrific: The Cleveland Browns' Matt Stover missed a field

goal from 47 yards and had a 34-yarder blocked, both in the final two minutes of a 23–21 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals; the Green Bay Packers' Chris Jacke blew a 42-yarder in overtime in a 19–16 loss to the Jets; San Francisco's Mike Cofer missed from 33, 32, 32 and 47 yards in a 17–14 loss to the Atlanta Falcons; and the Houston Oilers' Ian Howfield pulled a 33-yarder to the left with four seconds to play in Washington, and the Redskins won 16–13 in overtime. Howfield was fired the next day.

So why is it that even though every year a few kickers alter the course of their teams' seasons, clubs still don't place more emphasis on scouting, drafting and coaching kickers? Every team has at least one special teams coach, but only one team, the Dallas Cowboys, has a kicking coach—someone who works exclusively with the kickers and their strange and fragile psyches.

Of course, predicting who's going to be a standout kicker and who's going to choke on a 33-yarder at RFK Stadium with four seconds remaining might be the toughest task in football. The most accurate field goal kicker in league history, Nick Lowery (.793) of the Kansas City Chiefs, had the door slammed in his face by the Jets, New England Patriots, Tampa Bay Bucs, Indianapolis Colts, Philadelphia Eagles, Bengals, Redskins, Redskins again, New Orleans Saints, Chargers, Colts again and Jets again before catching on with K.C. in 1980. "It's impossible to measure what's inside someone," Lowery says, "and that's what keeps sports exciting. If every kicker made every kick at the end of every game, would fourth quarters be exciting anymore? You want to watch robots, go someplace else."

Case in point: Gary Anderson, who is 5' 11", 179 pounds, was a soccer player in South Africa who moved to the U.S. as a youth. He has an accurate but not powerful leg. He developed his placekicking skills at Syracuse. He has been with the Pittsburgh Steelers for 10 years and ranks third alltime in field goal accuracy (.763). John Lee is 5' 11", 180 pounds. He was a soccer and baseball player in South Korea who moved to the U.S. as a youngster. He had an accurate but not powerful leg. He sharpened his kicking skills at UCLA, and he was the St. Louis Cardinals' kicker for one season.

"The difference between Gary Anderson and John Lee is almost nothing," says Cleveland special teams player Ron Wolfley, a former Cardinal. "So why is Anderson one of the greatest of all time, and why is Lee a bust? Mental toughness. It's a cliché, but it's the absolute truth. The kicker is all alone—he misses it, he blew it. It might not be true, but that's what everybody thinks."

Steve Little and Lee are prime examples of why teams rarely take kickers high in the draft. George Boone, the former St. Louis personnel director, drafted Little in the first round in 1978 and Lee in the second round in '86. "A lot of people give lip service to the kicking game," says Boone. "We took kickers because we felt they were a crucial part of the game." But the Cardinals didn't know that Little was such a party animal and didn't take into account that Lee's kickoffs were weak and didn't realize that both players performed poorly in critical situations. In three seasons Little and Lee combined to make 21 of 40 field goals.

"You've got to be able to absorb some of the stuff that happens in pro football, the pressure and the criticism from the coaches," says Lee, who now sells real estate in Southern California. "I guess I wasn't mature enough then. It just ate away at me, and I couldn't wait to be cut."

■ *A front-row seat isn't necessarily the best place to watch a kicker warm up.*





■ *Even a mound of ground can send a kicker hobbling to the sideline.*

Boone says he still has no regrets about having spent high draft choices on Little and Lee, but he did learn something about kickers. "Football players are drummers," Boone says. "Kickers are violinists."

In 26 games between September 1985 and October 1986, including the preseason, regular season and postseason, the Giants used kickers Ali Haji-Sheikh, Jess Atkinson, Eric Schubert, Haji-Sheikh, Bob Thomas, Haji-Sheikh, Thomas, Joe Cooper and Raul Allegre. Haji-Sheikh was injured three times in one calendar year ('86) in games against the Packers. "If I played Green Bay every week," the Sheikh said at the time, "I'd need to buy an ICU wing in a hospital."

Equally sad was the case of Thomas, who swung his right leg, hit a chunk of upraised turf and sprained his ankle during a prac-

tice in his first week with the team. Giant coach Bill Parcells, shaking his head incredulously, said, "Kickers don't get hurt. They're kickers, for crying out loud! How can kickers get hurt? All they do is kick!"

Allegre also bruised easily. He thought the Giants' practice regimen for kickers was excessive, and he regularly complained about aches and pains. Some Giant officials took to calling him Porcelain Groin. Still, the Giants won the Super Bowl after the '86 season.

Sometimes the steadiest kickers can come unglued. From 1986 through '89 the Seattle Seahawks' Norm Johnson missed a total of seven field goals from between 30 and 39 yards. But in '90 he missed six from that distance, and Seahawk fans buried him. "It gets to the point, when you miss a couple, where you feel like the salaries of your teammates are on your back and your back's against the wall," says Johnson, who went to two sports psychologists during the '90 season. "You can't think negatively. It'll kill you."

But last season, after having been cut by Seattle and signed by the Atlanta Falcons, he had his best kicking season (83% field goal accuracy) in seven years, including a perfect 13 for 13 inside the 40. What's more, Johnson, who as a member of the Seahawks kicked in the Kingdome, had his career year for a Falcon team that played 15 of its 16 regular-season games outdoors. His theory: When a kicker starts going bad and the negative feedback begins to steamroll, he gets caught in a no-win mind game, and he has to change teams.

Maybe hiring kicking coaches, such as the Cowboys' Steve Hoffman, a former Dickinson (Pa.) College punter, is the wave of the future. "I'm the shoulder they cry on," he says. "They're so alone. My job is to keep them comfortable."

His job is also to find kickers who are game tough, not flaky like Johansson. "When I scout a college kicker," Hoffman says, "I usually say a couple of things to challenge him, and then I look in his eyes and listen to his voice. How does he respond? When you look in his eyes, do you see confidence or paranoia? You have to go with your gut feeling on a guy."

Hoffman had a gut check this summer when he had to replace kicker Ken Willis, who went to the Tampa Bay Bucs under Plan B. Dallas signed two kickers—Brad Daluiso of the Buffalo Bills through Plan B and Lin Elliott, a free agent out of Texas Tech—and had them square off in the preseason. Elliott won the roster spot when he hit both of his field goal tries and put all four of his kickoffs into the end zone in the final preseason game. Even so, he was bothered by a strained groin, and the game doesn't count.

The scariest thing for NFL coaches to realize is this: If Johansson and his miracle leg were around today, he would probably still get a tryout somewhere. It's enough to make Peterson plot some revenge. "When I retire," says Peterson, "I'm going to open a kickers' camp. I'm going to get them all in there, and you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to throw pies in their faces." ■



■ *Who can blame a victimized coach or team exec for wanting to get even?*

HOME IMPROVEMENT.



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AFC east

D r . Z ' s S c o u t i n g R e p o r t

BIKERS AND PHILOSOPHERS, FUN LOVERS and deep thinkers—the defense sets the tone for the **New York Jets**. In pass rushers Dennis Byrd, Jeff Lageman and Marvin Washington, weakside linebacker Mo Lewis and right cornerback James Hasty, who is ready to step into the ranks of the NFL's ultra-elite, there's a frenzied kind of talent at work. And all of it is brought to a high, overachieving level by coordinator Pete Carroll, 40, who's almost as free-spirited as the guys he coaches.

The Jets are a team of exceptional courage. Last season they bounced back from a heartbreaking Monday night loss in Chicago to crush Miami. The Jets had to beat the Dolphins again, in Miami, to reach the playoffs, and they did it by coming from behind and winning in overtime. So what's holding New York back?

Failure in the red zone, the goal-line neighborhood. Quarterback Ken O'Brien has been a sturdy warrior over the years, but he has taken too many hits. When the offense gets in close, he freezes. So the Jets devoted most of their training camp to the grooming of Browning Nagle, the team's second-round draft pick in '91.

The Jets made it easy for Nagle. They presented O'Brien with an insulting salary offer that they knew would keep him out of camp long enough for Nagle to get plenty of snaps and game action with the varsity. Nagle responded with an up-and-down preseason; sometimes he was brilliant, sometimes he was disastrous. When the team and O'Brien agreed on a contract midway through the preseason, he reported to camp and stepped into a situation that was all but settled. Even after O'Brien looked impressive in the final

two preseason games, Nagle was named the starter last Saturday.

Nagle is a pleasant, sleepy-eyed fellow with a fine arm, but how much inner fire he has is anybody's guess. If he comes through, then the Jets will be a serious Super Bowl contender. They can run the ball well enough, even though the coaches still haven't figured out that Freeman McNeil is the best back they have—Blair Thomas included. Al Toon and Rob Moore, a terrific set of wideouts, can make things happen downfield, and tight end Johnny Mitchell, this season's first-round draft pick, should be something special. New York could be the sleeper team of 1992.

What a shame that the **Buffalo Bills** picked Super Bowl '92 to come down with a case of the goofies. All that work, all that no-huddle magic, and then it blew up in a week and a game in which they appeared to lose their focus. Hardest hit was

AFC East Forecast

1. N.Y. JETS	10 - 6
2. BUFFALO	10 - 6
3. MIAMI	8 - 8
4. NEW ENGLAND	6 - 10
5. INDIANAPOLIS	4 - 12

Thurman Thomas, a superb back who became the first player since Jim Brown to lead the NFL in combined rushing and receiving yardage for three straight years. His nobody-loves-me quotes, the lost helmet at the start of the Super Bowl—that's all behind him, he says.

The Broncos showed the world how to play defense against Buffalo: Collapse the pocket and send quarterback Jim Kelly scurrying around the perimeter. The Redskins cashed in on that strategy in Super XXVI. Of course, having one of its sturdiest linemen, 310-pound guard John Davis, out and his replacement, Glenn Parker, hobbling on a bad knee didn't help Buffalo. Davis is still recovering from knee surgery. The offense, now minus its coordinator, Ted Marchibroda, who left to become coach of the Colts, will have more two-back sets this year and less no-huddle. Unpredictability is the phrase you heard around camp.

Defensive theory has changed too, the Bills say. No more running around blocks. Meet 'em head-on and play it tough, the way the Giants and the Eagles do it. We'll see. With end Bruce Smith ailing last year, linebacker Cornelius Bennett did a heroic job of rushing the passer, but can he do it again? Smith is still rehabilitating his tender knee. This team has outstanding talent, but a lot of ifs.

Ever since the **Miami Dolphins** became a Dan Marino-led passing machine, they've been drafting for defense in trying to give some balance to the team. They have had a few successes—most notably linebacker John Offerdahl in '86, end Jeff Gross in '88 and safety Louis Oliver in '89—but only now have the Dolphins possibly found their impact guy, 259-pound pass-rushing linebacker Marco Coleman. A defense that has been in an eight-year slump could start showing signs of life.

Coleman, Miami's second first-round draft choice (the other, cornerback Troy Vincent, has been slow to develop), was a wrecker's ball in the preseason. And how important is a demon pass rusher? Just ask the Giants, whose whole tempo changed when Lawrence Taylor joined them in '81. Now the Dolphins, who have long been soft against the run, can crowd their linebackers and safeties in closer. Less time for the passer will make coverage assignments less nerve-racking. And better defense means better field position for Marino and the offense, which now includes former Denver blue-chip runner Bobby Humphrey.



RICK STEWART/ALLSPORT USA

■ *The heart of the Jet defense is a pass rush led by free spirits such as Lageman (here sacking Packer Mike Tomczak).*

Are we laying too much on a rookie? Probably, but this is an operation that desperately needs a shot of adrenaline. In the next few seasons Don Shula should pass George Halas as the winningest NFL coach of all time, but the Dolphins have missed the playoffs five of the last six seasons. They could see postseason action this year.

If front-office turmoil had a direct relationship to performance on the field, then the **New England Patriots** would be in a deep hole. The interim owner, James Orthwein, wants to sell the team or move it to St. Louis or something. The club's CEO, Sam Jankovich, has front-office personnel terrified of him. But what does this all mean when the Pats are digging in to stop an opponent on third-and-one and second-year coach Dick MacPherson—Coach Mac to his players—is running up and down the sideline, jacket flapping in the wind, screaming to hold them just this once? Or when the Pats

need to drive the length of the field to get back in the game?

Coach Mac's enthusiasm was a burst of sunlight in '91, and New England responded by stealing a few games and winning some others on pure intensity. But how long does that last? Talent is thin. The defense is spirited but unsound. The offensive line is subpar, and tackle Pat Harlow's lingering back problem, combined with top draft choice Eugene Chung's slow start, doesn't help.

Laboring behind one of the worst offensive lines in recent memory, quarterback Jeff George of the **Indianapolis Colts** played at a high level in all 16 regular-season games last year. Then on Aug. 22 he went down with a stretched ligament in the thumb of his throwing hand in a preseason game against the Bengals, and hearts stopped until the news came that he was not lost for the season—but probably for the first two games. His injury, though, sent a grim reminder to the Colts:

Get some protection for the franchise player before it's too late.

If you look at recent NFL disasters, teams that were supposed to be decent and then nose-dived (last year's 1-15 Colts certainly qualify), you'll usually find that one of two things caused the crash: a bad offensive line or no capable backup for an injured quarterback. Shortcomings such as these must be addressed.

Yet Indianapolis general manager Jim Irsay stuck to his premise that you win with defense, and he used the first two picks in the draft to take defensive tackle Steve Emtman, who was forceful in the preseason, and linebacker Quentin Coryatt, who was hampered by a bum ankle. Ordinarily those picks would make sense, but Indy shouldn't have shrugged off the miseries of its offensive line. Suddenly quarterback Jack Trudeau, who in 1989 was voted the team's MVP by his teammates and who was still a holdout when George went down, found himself bargaining for more than a backup's pay. ■

AFC Central

Dr. Z's Scouting Report

IT ALMOST LOOKS TOO EASY. THE **Houston Oilers** play 11 games in domed stadiums this year. They have only one cold-weather game, at Cleveland in December. Three of their first four games are at home, and so are three of their last four. Too easy. With the schedule suited to their run-and-shoot offense, the Oilers should waltz into the playoffs, fortified by a home field advantage.

Now we cut to the man with the wrinkled forehead. Bad things happened to Houston at the close of 1991. The Oilers lost three out of five games to end the regular season—because of gusty winds on the road, sacks, dropped balls, a Giant

rush because teams have figured out that the way to beat the run-and-shoot is not to sit back and worry about the draw play but to attack the pocket vigorously. Moon, who can stand and deliver with the best of them when he's comfortable, does not have the giddyap in his legs, the escape, that he once had. And the Houston defense, which has been improving, still can't carry the team. All of this translates into an Oiler playoff loss to either of two kinds of teams: one that will rush Moon relentlessly (the Jets) or one that could corner Houston at a bad-weather site (Denver or Buffalo).

Wideout Drew Hill, with 90 catches in 1991, accepted a Plan B offer from Atlanta, but a couple of rookies, linebacker Eddie Robinson and 300-pound defensive tackle Tim Roberts, look promising. At last word, disgruntled sack specialist Sean Jones was sticking to his retirement.

The most brilliant era in the history of the **Pittsburgh Steelers** drew to a close when coach Chuck Noll retired last December. Before anyone had a chance to sit back and reflect on the glories of the past, the broom was at work. Bill Cowher, the new coach, was shaking everything up. Gone were all the assistant coaches but Dick Hoak (running backs), who has been with the organization for 31 years. Hired were a bunch of assistants with whom Cowher had never worked. Practice techniques were changed, and new training equipment was trucked in. Team president Dan Rooney gave up the general manager duties he also held, turning them over to

Tom Donahoe, who had been his director of football development.

But the team remains strictly blue collar, with a small stadium, the lowest payroll in the league, no stars on offense and only one on defense, cornerback Rod Woodson, who is getting over a torn calf muscle. When linebacker Hardy Nickerson, a valuable six-year veteran, was lowballed on his contract (a 5% raise to \$248,000; the average starting NFL linebacker makes more than twice that), the Steeler players received a chilling message: There are no big bucks—except, of course, for the top draft choices. Everyone pays them.

Is this a formula for mediocrity? Maybe Cowher can work wonders; maybe his defensive know-how (he was Kansas City's coordinator) can revive a unit that slumped from No. 1 in the league in 1990 to No. 22, and whose starting secondary has been depleted by injuries and holdouts. Maybe offensive coordinator Ron

AFC Central Forecast

1. HOUSTON	11 - 5
2. PITTSBURGH	8 - 8
3. CLEVELAND	6 - 10
4. CINCINNATI	6 - 10

running game that hammered their defense, you name it. In the postseason the Jets shoved them around for the whole second half and should have beaten them. Then, against Denver in the next round, Houston was killed by dropped passes and John Elway's magnificent last-minute drive to set up the winning field goal.

O.K., so the Oilers project into the playoffs because the division is a steal. But the postseason won't be so easy. Quarterback Warren Moon will be 36 in November. He'll be facing a merciless

■ With Moon (1) approaching 36, the sun is setting on Houston title hopes.

AL THELMANS



Erhardt's simplified attack will work just right for Neil O'Donnell, who won the quarterback battle with Bubby Brister. Maybe a draft that was strongest at blue-collar positions (tackle-guard Leon Searcy, inside linebacker Levon Kirkland, noseguard Joel Steed, tight end Russ Campbell) will change the picture.

That's a lot of maybes, but that's what it'll be like for a while in the post-Noll era.

The **Cleveland Browns** have been an organization marked by office politics, whisperers behind doors and much jockeying to get owner Art Modell's ear. However, it seems that after one year on the job, coach Bill Belichick has the clout to call his own shots and get his own people in place. Now all he has to worry about is what happens on the field.

The biggest concern was the offensive line, but when the Browns anted up last week and paid Jay Hilgenberg the money the Bears wouldn't, they got an All-Pro

center. In 1990 quarterback Bernie Kosar went down 91 times—37 sacks and 54 knockdowns. Last year he got decked 107 times, including a career-high 41 sacks. Though he's only 28, he must be shell-shocked. To make matters worse for Kosar, the offensive line got no help in the draft, and his wideouts are missing. Reggie Langhorne was a Plan B free agent signed by the Colts, Brian Brennan was cut and Webster Slaughter was still holding out when camp ended.

If there's any consolation on offense, it's that there is now a big, bruising rookie fullback, Tommy Vardell, and a Super Bowl hero, former Giant tight end Mark Bavaro, to help the Browns get back to the basics. Belichick is a defensive coach, and name one who doesn't like a basic, ball-control offense. O.K., Tom Landry was one. Yeah, Jack Pardee's another, but there aren't many.

A defensive unit that could be good, in an overachieving kind of way, has been

slow to come together because of injuries. Pro Bowl defensive tackle Michael Dean Perry is coming off surgery he had on his right knee in July.

When Don Shula, at 33, was hired to coach the Baltimore Colts in 1963, there were no quotes that said, "Wow, what a great move, what a stroke of genius." There was a lot of head scratching. Gee, 33 years old. . . . So I will tread lightly in trying to figure out why in the wide blue sky the **Cincinnati Bengals** chose 33-year-old Dave Shula, Don's son, to be their sixth head coach.

There were a lot of smirks and plenty of gossip around the league: Cincinnati vice-president/general manager Mike Brown regards the Shulas as "family," Don did a terrific job lobbying for the kid, the Bengals got a real break on Dave's salary. The usual stuff. After all, Dave had worked for two years in Dallas and suffered what some people consider a demotion, from offensive coordinator in 1989 to quarterback coach in '90. Then last year he was Cincy's receivers coach and was, well, organized. . . . uh, well organized.

This move will either be viewed as a disaster or as a stroke of genius. There will be no middle ground.

Boomer Esiason seems to have jumped on the bandwagon. He said he liked the idea that Shula stayed away and let the quarterback coach, Dana Bible, work with the QBs. "You don't have that pressure of the head coach watching you the whole time," says Esiason. That's an oblique slap at former coach Sam Wyche, who is now drawing praise in Tampa for his hands-on approach to the quarterbacking. You go with the flow.

The offense was functional last year, but now it's struggling, with top wideout Eddie Brown (ruptured disk) lost for the year, and the line unsettled by holdouts. The defense was ranked last in the league, so Shula swept out that half of the coaching staff and brought in former Charger assistant Ron Lynn to be the coordinator.

The draft was a good one for the Bengals once you get past the fact that their first selection, quarterback David Klingler, held out so long that he is virtually a write-off for '92. Darryl Williams, the team's second pick in the first round, will play a lot at free safety, and Carl Pickens, the second-round choice, is a gifted receiver. A couple more good drafts, and Shula could have something going. ■



AFC West

Dr. Z's Scouting Report

THE DENVER BRONCOS DIDN'T WIN THE Super Bowl when they had the Orange Crush defense. They didn't win it when they had the Three Amigos. But now, stripped of nicknames, still seeking an identity, they are our pick to win Super Bowl XXVII. How come? Three reasons.

First, there's the When in Doubt theory. When in doubt, when you can't quite figure how the races are going to go, pick the team that always manages to slop in there. Washington's a When in Doubt team. So is Denver.

Then, there's the They're Not What You Think They Are theory. Picture the Broncos, and what comes to mind? Soft defense, John Elway throwing for a million yards. Uh-uh. They're not like that. Last year, with people like nosetackle Greg Kragen and linebacker Karl Mecklenburg and safety Steve Atwater and rookie linebacker Mike Croel hustling their fannies off, Denver had a tenacious, aggressive defense that was ranked first in the AFC. On offense they were one of the handful of teams that called more running than passing plays. Coach Dan Reeves is from the old Tom Landry school: You don't get anyplace if you can't run the ball. Gaston Green, the recently traded Bobby Humphrey, Sammy Winder in the old days—plug in any back, and the Broncos seem to find a way to make the ground game go.

Finally, the road to the Super Bowl runs through Buffalo, and Denver is one team that knows how to play the Bills. The Broncos swarmed all over them in the AFC Championship Game last season, making Jim Kelly's life miserable, and they would have beaten the Bills but

for three missed field goals and a deflected pass that Buffalo intercepted and returned for a touchdown. Now Denver is the hungry team, possessing some of the fire that might have gone out of Buffalo.

Let's get one thing straight right away. There is no quarterback controversy on the **Los Angeles Raiders**. Al Davis, the top guy, says so. Art Shell, the coach, says so. Mike White, the quarterback coach, says so. "Jay Schroeder's the guy," White says. "It's all settled."

O.K., now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's talk about the quarterback controversy. Schroeder throws the high hard one, sometimes out of the strike zone. Todd Marinovich is the junkball pitcher—soft stuff, with control. When Schroeder went down with ankle injuries, Marinovich came in and dazzled Kansas

The offensive unit seems to have a spark when Marinovich is in there. A lot of guys are pulling for him. It's a nagging concern for the coaches, and the party line is, We're so strong in other areas that we don't have to put the burden on the quarterback. Maybe they're right. The Raiders have always been serious about their running game.

The offensive linemen have been packing on the weight, getting ready for the big push. Center Don Mosebar and left guard Steve Wisniewski have bulked up to more than 300 pounds. The path through the Raider backfield has been a route from stardom to oblivion, with Greg Bell and Roger Craig both making the trip in the last few years. Now the Raiders have Eric Dickerson. But, remember, it's always Marcus Allen who gets the tough yards.

The **Kansas City Chiefs** have taken the first big step, from dogs of the division to solid playoff team. But as they have found out, the next step is harder. One dimension of their game was lacking last season: the ability to go deep.

Last year the clock finally ran out on 37-year-old Steve DeBerg, who was coming off a miraculous 1990 season. He just couldn't get that *oomph* on his passes. The Chiefs' leading receiver, Robb Thomas, with 43 catches, ranked 66th in the NFL. In the playoffs Buffalo crowded in close to stop K.C.'s big-hammer ground game and jammed the wideouts at the line, defying the Chiefs to go deep. The season was over. Time for a change.

In came 33-year-old Dave Krieg, a Plan B signee from Seattle, to play quarterback. But where are the wideouts? The only receiver who can get deep is Tim Barnett, unless you count 30-year-old Stephone Paige, who's coming back from knee surgery. Clearly a trade is needed. It's time to dip into that vast well of backfield talent—Christian Okoye, Barry Word, Harvey Williams, Kimble Anders, Todd McNair—and trade somebody to get a flier. Don't bet they won't.

Since Alex Spanos acquired the team in 1984, the **San Diego Chargers** have had one winning record, in the strike season of 1987, and even that team lost its last six games. There have been three general managers in that time, and four coaches, the latest being Bobby Ross, who turned the Georgia Tech program around. It's an organization run by fear and impatience.

AFC West Forecast

1. DENVER	11 - 5
2. L.A. RAIDERS	11 - 5
3. KANSAS CITY	10 - 6
4. SAN DIEGO	6 - 10
5. SEATTLE	5 - 11

City in the season finale with his assortment of loopers and bloopers, pitching three TD passes with no interceptions.

A week later, in the first round of the playoffs, the Chiefs had their timing down, and they slammed Marinovich's soft stuff into the seats—four interceptions for K.C. in its 10-6 victory. The kid was a rookie. What the hell. . .

Even Bobby Beathard, in his third year as general manager, hasn't been able to make a dent. He won't this year, either.

San Diego can punish a soft defense with its big backs, Marion Butts and Rod Bernstine. They can, on occasion, rise up and stop opposing runners. But when it's time to spread the formation, they're in trouble—on both sides of the ball.

Their quarterback is much-traveled Bob Gagliano, who is playing with his fifth pro team in eight years. He beat out Stan Humphries, a Redskin reject who was picked up in a trade when John Friesz went out for the year with a knee injury in a preseason game. Aside from Ross, the most interesting newcomer is another coach: Bill Arnsparger, the architect of Don Shula's 53-Defense, who, like an old war-horse hearing that final bugle, cast off five years as a college administrator and returned to combat. He'll coach the defense. Good luck.

Ken Behring, the **Seattle Seahawks'** owner, wanted coach Chuck Knox to play rookie quarterback Dan McGwire last year. Knox stuck with Dave Krieg. Behring wanted more flash in the offense.

DR. Z'S POSTSEASON FORECAST

AFC

DIVISION CHAMPIONS: *N.Y. Jets (10-6), Houston (11-5), Denver (11-5)*

WILD-CARD TEAMS: *Buffalo (10-6), L.A. Raiders (11-5), Kansas City (10-6)*

FIRST-ROUND PLAYOFFS: *Buffalo beats Raiders, Jets beat Kansas City*

SECOND-ROUND PLAYOFFS: *Denver beats Buffalo, Jets beat Houston*

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP: *Denver beats Jets*

NFC

DIVISION CHAMPIONS: *Dallas (10-6), Chicago (11-5), San Francisco (13-3)*

WILD-CARD TEAMS: *Washington (10-6), Philadelphia (9-7), Detroit (9-7)*

FIRST-ROUND PLAYOFFS: *Washington beats Philadelphia, Dallas beats Detroit*

SECOND-ROUND PLAYOFFS: *Dallas beats Chicago, San Francisco beats Washington*

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP: *Dallas beats San Francisco*

SUPER BOWL XXVII: *Denver 24, Dallas 17*

Knox said, Thanks, but I'll do it my way. Two weeks after the '91 season, Knox was on his way to Anaheim to coach the Rams. Seattle's new coach is Tom Flores, the team's president and someone who knows how to get along with the owner.

Does this mean that McGwire, who threw seven passes last year, is the starting quarterback? No, the job went to Kelly Stouffer, who threw 15 passes in '91.

The defense will be solid again because the coach, Tom Catlin, is one of the best in the business and because he's blessed with two of the finest, and most underrated, defensive backs in football—corner Dwayne Harper and free safety Eugene Robinson. If ex-Viking Keith Millard ever recovers from his knee injuries and regains any of his old pass-rushing magic, the defense will be even better.

■ *The Broncos, who have had great success running the football, gave it to Green last season for 1,037 yards.*



DAMIAN STROHMEYER

Inside the nfl

By Peter King

He Won't Let It Buffalo Him

Last summer, when quarterback Jim Kelly of the Bills bumped into his Bronco counterpart, John Elway, Kelly said, "Now I know how you feel." This summer, when the two met again, Kelly said, "Now I'm starting to catch you."

What a curse the Super Bowl has been for some of the AFC's best quarterbacks.

Elway is winless in three Super Bowl appearances, and now here comes Kelly, who's 0-2 in the Big One and has a good shot at a third straight trip to the title game. Last January, Kelly got mugged by the Redskin pass rush and threw three interceptions in the first 31 minutes to help put Buffalo in a 24-0 hole.

Nevertheless, Kelly's lousy showing in Minneapolis doesn't haunt him. He's too confident and too resilient to be spooked by one of his worst days as a pro. But that hasn't always been the case. Kelly needs to have team and individual success, or he slips into a funk and begins to lose his commanding edge.

It last happened in 1989. Kelly played poorly in three consecutive losses late in the year, and the Bills almost blew the AFC East title. His agent/brother, Dan, convened a meeting of the six Kelly brothers at Jim's Orchard Park, N.Y., house to cheer up the slumping quarterback. And that's the last pep talk Jim has needed. In the past two seasons combined, he completed 63.8% of his passes and threw for 57 touchdowns, with 26 interceptions.

Even with Buffalo planning to use the

■ Kelly had trouble standing up to the Skins' pass rush in Super Bowl XXVI.



MANY UNHAPPY RETURNS

Looking for the most startling stat of last season? Try this one: On 54 punts in 1991, the Bills yielded a total of 53 return yards. The league average was 310 yards per team, and there were 11 punt returns longer than 53 yards. Since the NFL changed the rules in 1973, allowing only two members of the punting team to release downfield before the ball is kicked, no team has slammed the door on punt returns the way Buffalo did last year. The Bills gave up an average of 3.5 yards on the 15 punts that were run back. Here are the five best punt-coverage teams since the rules changed.

Team	Year	Ret. Yds. Allowed	Avg. Return
1. Bills	1991	53	3.5
2. Browns	1987	93	5.5
3. Redskins	1973	104	7.4
4. Steelers	1990	105	6.6
5. Bears	1986	110	4.8

running game a bit more this year (big back Carwell Gardner will be joining Thurman Thomas in two-back sets), Kelly could have a big year—as long as he avoids memories of those two Super Bowl defeats. "Nobody knows, except maybe John, what it's like to lose two Super Bowls in a row," says Kelly, forgetting for a minute that one NFC quarterback, Fran Tarkenton of the Vikings, lost three Super Bowls, including two straight in the mid-'70s. "You can't feel it in baseball, or basketball, or hockey, where there's a best-of-seven championship. In the NFL it's one game, winner take all, to be the king of kings. You have an off day, and it's all over. The low is pretty low.

"But all during the off-season, I'd see people and they'd say, 'You guys'll get your chance again.' And what encourages me is I know they're right. How many teams in the NFL right now can say they definitely have a chance to be in the Super Bowl this year? Eight, maybe 10. But everybody knows we're one of them."

Don't Touch That Dial

The Olympic TripleCast was a pay-per-view disaster, but that hasn't scared off the NFL. The league has plans to experiment with pay-per-view in 1994, probably in two test markets—one NFL and one non-NFL city. All the games not scheduled to be shown on free channels in those two cities will be made available to cable subscribers on a pay-per-view basis at a cost of \$12 to \$15 a game.

Art Modell, the owner of the Browns and the chairman of the NFL's television committee, foresees no radical change in how the league televises its games on free TV for the balance of the decade. That's a wise move, because certain members of Congress have said they will jump all over the league if it starts making fans pay for any of the games they now see on free TV.

According to Modell, the league wants to include the pay-per-view experiment in the next TV contract it negotiates with the networks, after the '93 season. He thinks pay-per-view football will work, unlike the pay-per-view Olympics. "The TripleCast taught me that pay-per-view will work for only special events," Modell says. "You can't charge people for something they get a load of on regular TV."

But isn't that just what the NFL plans to do? Most weeks, five games are available on free TV. "But if you want to see your favorite team, it may not be on locally," says Modell. "You only have 16 chances to see your team in a year."

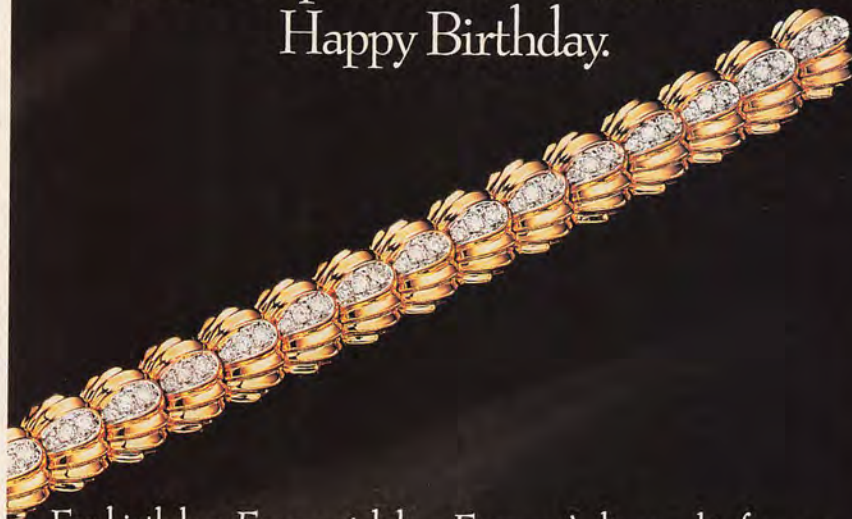
But That Team Was Awful

Fifteen years ago Eddie DeBartolo Jr. paid \$17 million for the 49ers. Last week DeBartolo paid \$7.8 million to have Jerry Rice play wide receiver in San Francisco for the next three seasons.

Dispatches

The early line on the 1993 draft is that it will be mediocre. On one team's draft board only two players are rated 7.0 or higher (immediately helpful as rookies, on a scale of 9): Notre Dame quarterback Rick Mirer and Washington tackle Lincoln Kennedy. . . . With all the attention paid to the Astros' 26-game road trip, consider this: The Oilers racked up even more mileage playing five preseason away games in August. The total was 19,468 miles—from Houston to Tokyo to Houston to Detroit to Houston to Dallas to Houston to New Orleans to Houston to Los Angeles to Houston. . . . The Aug. 26 trade that sent sack artist Charles Haley from the 49ers to the Cowboys looks like a good one for Dallas. Haley is 28 and in reasonably good health, and here's what he cost the Cowboys: a second-round pick in 1993 and San Francisco's choice of either a swap of first- and third-round picks with Dallas in '93 or a third-round pick in '94. The Cowboys got assurances from their doctors that Haley has recovered from shoulder and knee injuries, both of

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which required surgery in the off-season. And Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson may be the only coach east of Al Davis who can handle Haley's mood swings.

Game of the Week

Washington at Dallas, Monday. The Rivalry is back. In February players from the Redskins and the Cowboys barnstormed through Texas together, playing charity basketball games. There wasn't much mingling, though, between the Cowboys

and the Skins. "We'd be in the back of the bus, playing cards, listening to loud music, having a few beers," says Dallas wideout Michael Irvin. "They'd be in front, being quiet, reading. We're like, 'What is this, a library?' Strange dudes."

The End Zone

Lamar Hunt owns the Kansas City Chiefs and is one of the 29 partners who own the Chicago Bulls. In the final round of last April's NFL draft, K.C. took a flier on

Oklahoma State basketball guard Corey Williams, who hasn't played football since he was a defensive back in the ninth grade. In June's NBA draft the Bulls chose Williams in the second round. Thus Hunt could be spending money to pay Williams both in basketball (the Bulls have signed him, and he'll give basketball a shot first) and in football. "I guess it's one step beyond the Bo Jackson thing," says Hunt, "although I don't see how it's possible to play both sports." ■

In Defense of the Future

THE ABUNDANCE OF MARQUEE TALENT moving into offensive skill positions in recent years has created a crying need for some impact players to emerge on defense. So it's noteworthy that of the five players SI projects to have breakthrough seasons in 1992, four are defensive players.

1. Eric Turner, Browns, SS, second year. This guy's ready to challenge Ronnie Lott for the title of heavyweight champion among defensive backs. Even though he missed half of last year with a stress fracture in his left leg, Turner, the second pick in the 1991

draft, made his mark in the AFC Central. On his first tackle as a pro, he bent former Bengal running back James Brooks's face mask. He KO'd Oiler wideout Ernest Givins on a crushing tackle. "I just want people to know that if they come into my turf, they'll pay," says Turner.

2. Robert Jones, Cowboys, MLB, rookie. Despite the view of rival scouts that Dallas had too high an opinion of Jones, a 6' 2", 236-pounder out of East Carolina, the Cowboys made him the 24th selection in the April draft with the expectation that he would become the dominant force that has been miss-

ing in the middle of their defense. "We watched the complete film of every game his junior and senior year, and our convictions were strengthened," says Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson. "We think he'll upgrade us significantly there." Jones will start opening night against the Redskins in place of Jack Del Rio, who accepted a Plan B offer from the Vikings after leading the Cowboys in tackles last year.

3. Johnny Mitchell, Jets, TE, rookie. Two things to remember here: 1) Jet coach Bruce Coslet, a former tight end himself, loves to throw to the tight end, and 2) the 6' 3", 263-pound Mitchell has terrific speed, excellent hands and exceptional desire. He could be significantly better than Rodney Holman, the Pro Bowl tight end Coslet developed while an assistant with the Bengals.

4. Aeneas Williams, Cardinals, CB, second year. Nobody could believe the way Williams blanketed NFC receivers last season. "This guy could be a Hall of Famer before he leaves the game," says former Phoenix running back Ron Wolfley, now with the Browns. "His cover skills are exceptional, and he's such a competitor." Williams was all-rookie last year after tying for the NFC lead in interceptions with six. This year he could be All-Pro.

5. Bill Hawkins, Rams, DE, fourth year. In four seasons at the University of Miami, Hawkins had a total of 22 sacks while playing right end on lines with the likes of Jerome Brown, Cortez Kennedy and Russell Maryland. Now, after playing left end his first three years as a pro, he's back on the right side, and he's playing next to another potentially premier tackle, rookie Sean Gilbert. "I haven't even been close to being the player I could be since I've been here," Hawkins says.

■ Turner can cool off Cleveland opponents with his heavyweight hitting.



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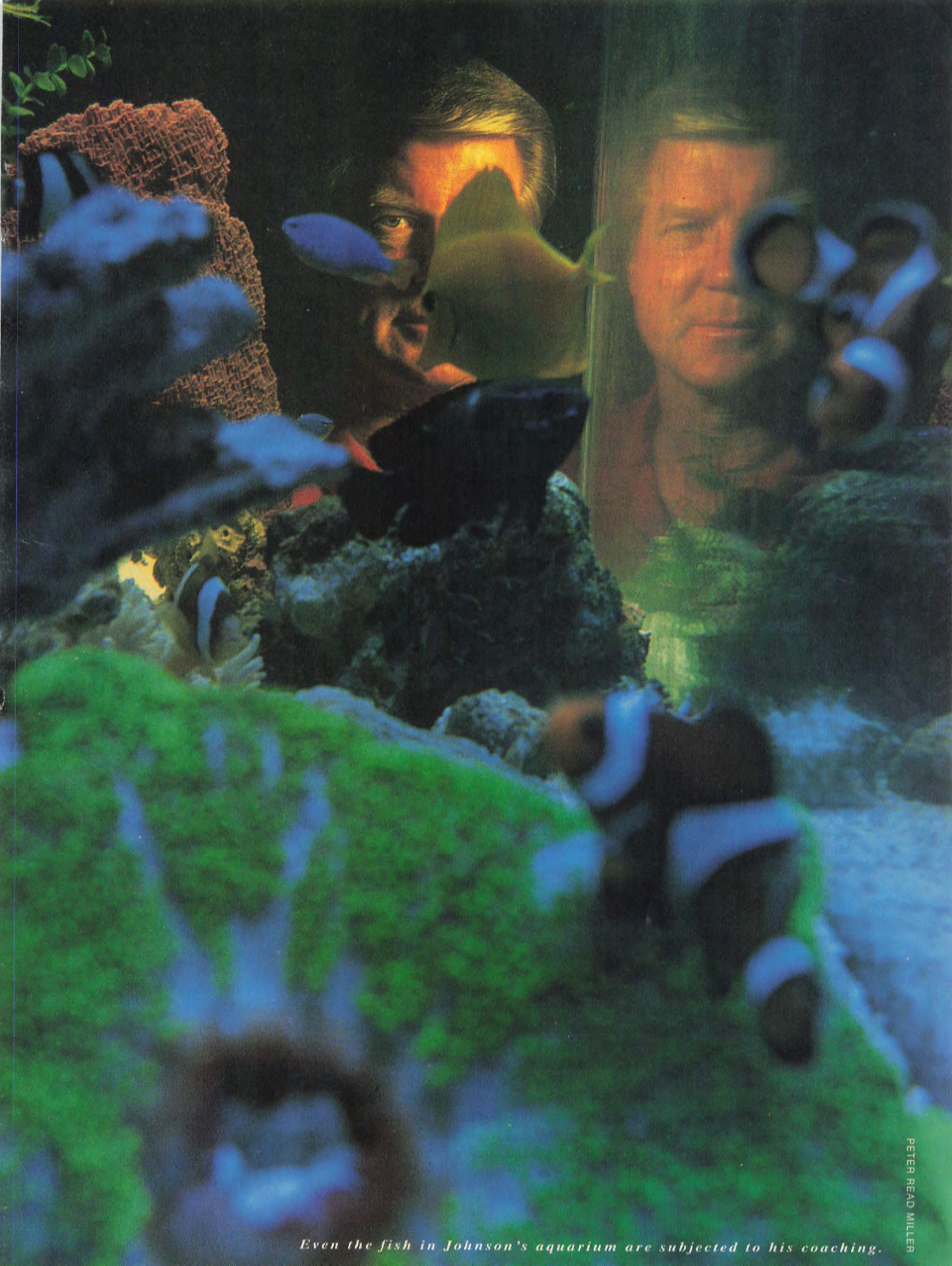
'92

nfl preview

Deep Into His Job

*Jimmy Johnson dived
headfirst into coaching
the Cowboys, and he won't
come up for air until
he wins a Super Bowl*

BY ED HINTON



Even the fish in Johnson's aquarium are subjected to his coaching.

Down near the docks in Port Arthur, Texas, a once rowdy seaport and refinery town that has seen its day, sits the public library. It's a source of local pride not only for its staunch, clean appearance amid abandoned buildings on deserted streets, but also because it serves as the town's museum. Near the rows of books are tributes to the region's best-known citizens, mostly



■ **Schoolmates**
Johnson and Joplin
(below) are cast in
bronze in the Port
Arthur museum.

musicians and athletes, with their sheet music and high school yearbooks and game jerseys on display. From Tex Ritter to the Big Bopper, from Bum Phillips to Tim McKyer, a wonderful menagerie of free spirits who dreamed bigger dreams than Port Arthur, even in its heyday, could handle are celebrated there. Two of the more prominent exhibits are busts of Janis Joplin and Jimmy Johnson, former schoolmates at Thomas Jefferson High, class of 1960 and '61, respectively.

A smart girl and a smart boy, equally driven but in different directions—each was somewhat disgusted by the other's burgeoning talents and antithetical personality. Janis, a painter of some merit and a folk singer in those days, had the look of a beatnik and was called Beat Weeds. Jimmy could solve algebra problems at a glance and write term papers worthy of A's the night before they were due. He was a football lineman with the scars of childhood street ball showing through his burr haircut and was called Scar Head.

By a quirk in scheduling, Janis and Jimmy once had to put up with each other in a history class for an entire school year, she seated behind him. He would tease the weirdo, "give her a hard time, irritate her," he remembers; she would scoff at the jock and ignore him as best she could.

Worlds apart sat adjacent that way in Port Arthur. At one end of Procter Street, the main drag, stood the warehouses, the gambling joints and the brawling saloons—all flouting Texas law for merchant sailors' cash. At the other end of Procter was a populace conservative in thought and speech, living on quiet, tree-lined streets and faithfully attending church. Port Arthur was a Texas boomtown, sprouting refinery pipelines and freighter masts, and as it was just 50 miles from the Louisiana line, it was also a Cajun town, with signs for boudin and the strains of twin fiddles. Port Arthur was segregated, but there was a middle ground where working-class whites and blacks lived so closely that their children could come home from "separate but equal" schools and learn to know each other well.

"Jimmy never thought there was any difference between him and the blacks," C.W. Johnson, Jimmy's daddy, said recently while driving through the old middle ground, where the Johnson family lived until 1962. "And he didn't like it when anybody said anything about it, either."

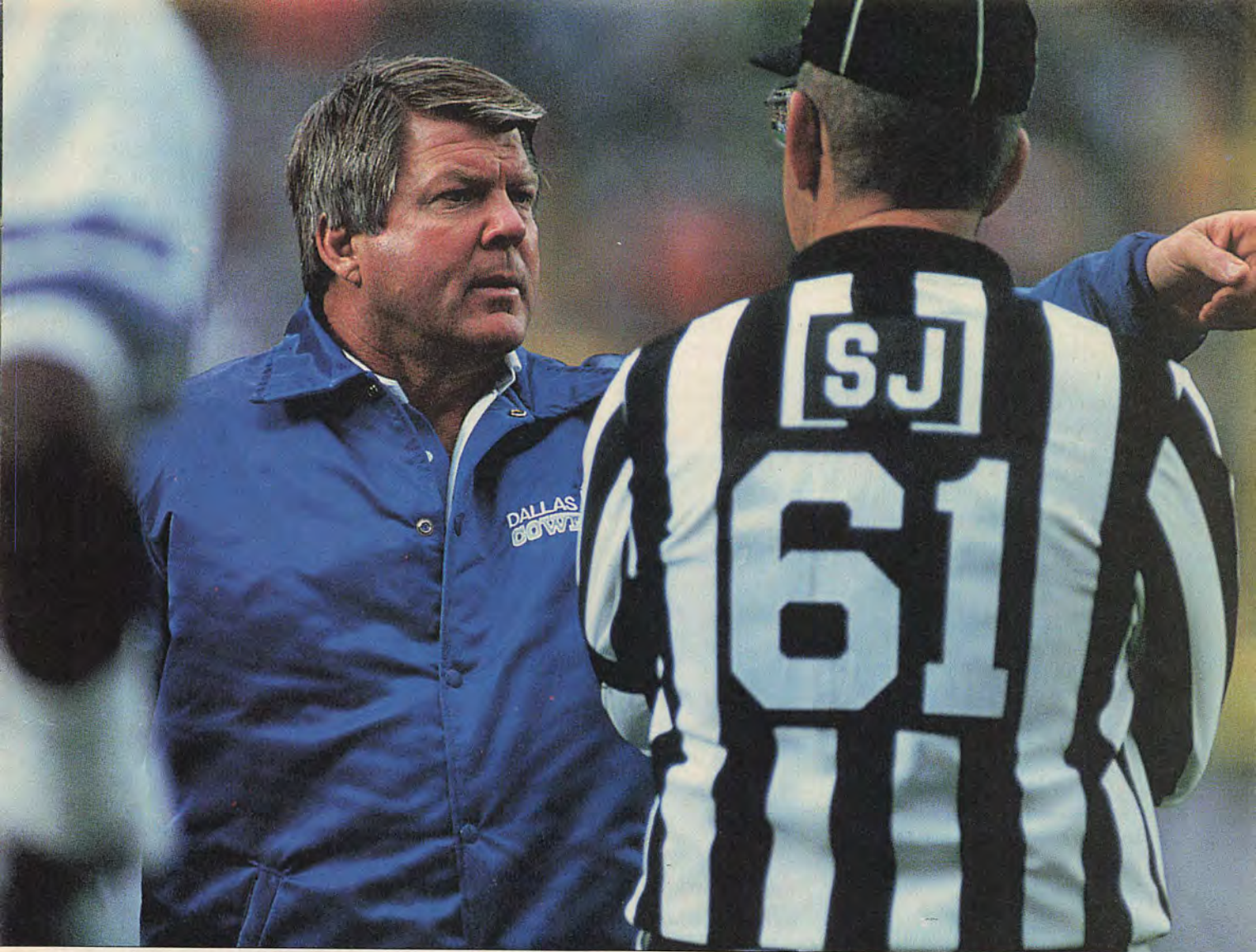
In their disregard for racial barriers, Beat Weeds and Scar Head were alike. They came to understand how life worked on the other side of the middle ground, and they took that insight with them as they continued on their divergent paths. Janis took it into a blues-singing frenzy, only to drop dead of a drug overdose at 27. Jimmy took it into football, where his savvy for massaging the human spirit in all its ethnic patterns would become an invaluable coaching tool.

After a vice cleanup in the mid-1960s and then the oil bust of the '80s, Port Arthur turned into a sleepy town with few signs of youth or ambition. But the unscarred library and its treasures inside stand as testimony to a brighter day. The bust of Janis is five-headed, the sculptor's interpretation of her multidimensional personality. The bust of Jimmy is conventional and features his trademark coiffed hair and hint of a smile. His face is portrayed as calm and unflinching, as it was when he arrived at the University of Miami in '84 to a cool welcome—he succeeded the beloved Howard Schnellenberger—and then set his players' spirits free, won a national championship and narrowly missed two more. It is the same smile he wore when he went to Dallas in '89 and was greeted by flat-out loathing—he displaced the legendary Tom Landry—and went about the task of tearing down a rotting facade and rebuilding the Cowboys. But like Janis, Jimmy has a personality that is multifaceted.

"It'll be quite a story, when all is said and done," says Cowboy running backs coach Joe Brodsky, 58, a Johnson skeptic in 1984 who became such a Johnson convert that he up and left the Miami area after 55 years to follow Johnson to Dallas. "How could a guy come in and take shotgun blasts in the face in two different programs and win a national championship with one and the Super Bowl with the other? Now won't that be a pisser?"

A Pretty Good Wizard For Johnson the hay is pretty much in the barn, as they say in Texas. At 49 he's got things just about the way he wants them—at last. "I'm doing what the hell I want to do," he says, meaning coaching football, drinking beer, eating ribs and living alone in a big house with four aquariums teeming with saltwater fish. There are no loose





pets, no wife and no kids around. His sons Brent, 28, and Chad, 26, are more like friends of his now; the three of them are closer than they've ever been. Jimmy's former wife of 26 years, Linda Kay, has gone to Venezuela to find a new life, waived, you might say, when Jimmy reorganized his own life three years ago to best suit the way he wanted to go about coaching the Cowboys.

All that remains for him to do now is to plug in another blue-chip player here and another real find there, win a Super Bowl or a few—"And we *will* win," he says—and then go off and lie on a beach, to be left alone for the rest of his days.

It was happy hour on a recent afternoon in a popular restaurant in Valley Ranch, the Dallas suburb that has the Cowboys' ultramodern practice facility and offices as its hub. Johnson was having a beer with Rhonda Rookmaaker, his girlfriend, but even more, "my buddy," he says. She's clever, and their relationship is largely a merry duel of wits and one-liners. They live three blocks apart, in a posh development about a Troy Aikman-to-Michael Irvin bomb from the Cowboys' training complex.

Yeah, Jimmy Johnson's got it like probably a lot of middle-aged American guys would love to have it. Some guys go through mid-life crisis. Jimmy is in mid-life bliss. "At least I'm not criticized for being phony," he says. "I'm just selfish." He pours another beer over ice and, acknowledging the black-hat raps, especially from his days at Miami, where he was perceived as the leader of a band of renegade players, says, "I'm not a bad man."

That, it is pointed out to Johnson, makes him sound like

the Wizard of Oz. When Dorothy pulled back the curtain, found a mere man there and said, "You're a bad, bad man," he replied, "I'm a very good man. I'm just not a very good wizard."

Johnson is amused by the analogy. "I won't even go so far as to tell you I'm a good man," he says. "But *I am* a pretty good wizard."

Earlier that afternoon, at the first day of minicamp, Johnson had spotted his Tin Man. ("Poor son of a bitch," Johnson says of the movie character, "didn't even know he had a heart till somebody told him. That's my job.") Rookie cornerback Clayton Holmes, a third-round draft choice out of little Carson-Newman College, was walking meekly off the Cowboy practice field, obviously awed by his surroundings. "Hey, Clayton, I saw you doing some really good things out there," said Johnson, out of the blue, from his seat on a bench near the locker-room entrance. Holmes looked up, surprised that Johnson even knew his name.

"Got a lot to learn, Coach," said Holmes.

"We think you can play here. We like you."

Well, you should have seen Holmes's face.

"Now," Johnson asks at happy hour, "how was he going to know he really can make this team unless somebody told him?"

Push enough buttons, and a pretty good wizard can go from 1-15 in his rookie season in the NFL to 7-9 and Coach of the

■ *Ever the wizard, Johnson doesn't miss many chances to put his psychology to work.*

Year the next season. Push a few more buttons, and the following year he goes 11-5, delivering on a preseason promise to Cowboy fans that Dallas would make the playoffs in 1991. Now Johnson is the toast of Texas, and "the people who were so ugly before, now they're licking his shoes, and you just want to go uh!" says Rhonda, pretending to smack someone across the face.

Tony Wise, the Cowboy offensive line coach, and Johnson go way back; they hooked up as assistants at Pitt in 1977 and have worked together almost every year since. Still, every few weeks, Wise comes up feeling like the Scarecrow did at the end of *The Wizard of Oz*. "Jimmy doesn't get in drills, and so many people have viewed that as a real chink in his armor—that he lets his people work," says Wise. "But he's fantastic at coming by, dropping hints, getting me thinking. Two weeks later I'll say, 'Jeez, Jimmy, I think we ought to do such-and-such.' And he'll say, 'That's a hell of an idea, Tony.'"

"Jimmy is a very shrewd man," says Irvin, who has played for Johnson in both Miami and Dallas and is the Lion of sorts in this scenario. "He'll make you do some things you don't want to do, and you *know* you don't want to do them, but for some reason you'll do them and enjoy it."

Irvin, who had an All-Pro season in 1991 with an NFC-high 93 receptions, was perceived at Miami as the quintessential Hurricane hot dog, who, among other things, ran right up into the Orange Bowl bleachers after a touchdown catch. Johnson was regarded as the guy who turned those hot dogs and other assorted hell-raisers loose on the rest of the country. The Miami players really stirred things up before the 1986 national championship game, in the Fiesta Bowl against clean-cut Penn State.

Some Hurricane players wore camouflage fatigues as they deplaned in Tempe, Ariz.; all of them walked out of a steak fry honoring both teams; and during pregame warmups some Miami players swore at Penn State players and coaches. When Penn State coach Joe Paterno's "good kids" won the game 14-10, Middle America cheered.

Johnson cuts to the bottom line when he talks of the resentment that built up against his Miami teams. "We had a lot of black players out front," he says. "I think a lot of the resentment came that way. The black players knew that, and the black players knew how I felt. I don't know that there was racism involved in the resentment, but there was some ignorance involved—people who have had few dealings with other ethnic groups. I mean real relationships, not getting somebody to clean your house."

Does Johnson genuinely have such a great rapport with his players? "With the blacks? Yes!" says Irvin. "He'll sit there and listen—I mean, really listen. You know he's in your corner, no matter how the media caves in on you. It takes the load off. Then when you go on the field and the man says, 'I want you to run down there, catch that ball and run into that wall,' who are you to say no? You say, 'O.K., Coach, you were there for me, and now

I'm going to give it up for you.' And you run into the wall."

At Miami, Johnson was "such a father," says Irvin. "We'd have these Thursday-night meetings where he would go around the room to each individual, and you had to tell him what you planned on doing in 10 years. He wouldn't let you say football. And you had to tell him what you were doing toward that goal."

"Now it's just football," Irvin says of the relationship between coach and player in the NFL. "I know he loves football, but I think he misses being that fatherly figure to so many kids."

"I don't want to lose the feeling I have for players," says Johnson, "but the pro system almost causes you to be cold and insensitive, when you have to release players yearly."

But the tough personnel moves that have to be made in the NFL also offer Johnson an opportunity to work his wizardry. And never has he been more of a wiz than when he instigated the famous Herschel Walker deal in October 1989. While jogging with his assistants during a lunch break, "Jimmy was talking about what we could do to get this thing turned quicker," says defensive coordinator Dave Wannstedt, who also hooked up with Johnson for the first time at Pitt. "What did we have of value on the club?"

The answer was easy: Walker, who rushed for 1,514 yards and caught 53 passes for 505 yards the year before,



■ Jimmy (center) was a real handful as a kid and was a tenacious noseguard at Arkansas.



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It all revolves around this. Think when you drink.

was the only Pro Bowl player Dallas had left. But Johnson doesn't believe in building an offense around one player. Besides, he sensed something in Walker. "Jimmy's into all that psychology baloney," says Wise, forgetting how well it works on Wise himself. "Jimmy said, 'I'm concerned about whether Herschel's heart is in it for the long run.'" And so to the shock of his assistants running beside him, Johnson decided he would try to deal Walker for a package of players and draft picks.

To their everlasting regret, the Minnesota Vikings made the trade Johnson dreamed up on that run. In return for Walker, Dallas got five players and seven high draft choices, two of which were first-round picks the Cowboys used to trade up so they

defensive genius after they beat us 31-0 [in 1988]. I guess I always had a lot of secret respect for him."

Scar Head By the vacant lot where the Johnson house once stood runs DeQueen Boulevard, in Port Arthur's old middle ground. The boulevard has a grass median, 10 yards wide. "We'd play tackle football there—no helmets, no pads, with some local kids, the black kids," says Johnson. "I mean, we'd have some knock-down-drag-outs. I've got scars on my head because when you got knocked out-of-bounds you'd go into the street. They were guys I hung around with. Baby Joe and I.E."

C.W. and Allene Johnson and their first son, Wayne, moved from Clarksville, Ark., to Port Arthur in 1942, the year before Jimmy was born. The Johnsons moved into the house on DeQueen Boulevard in 1949, when C.W. left his job as an oil-refinery mechanic to become a supervisor at a local dairy. "It was a company house," says C.W., who could walk right out the back door to the dairy.

At the elementary school for white children, Jimmy's best friend was Jimmy (Max) Maxfield, who dubbed him Scar Head. In junior high Scar Head and Max became partners in a successful "tour" business. Smooth operators, they had gained entrée to several of the better bordellos, whose keepers wouldn't let them

partake of the hired help or allow them to drink but thought they were cute and let them look around. "So Jimmy and I would charge other kids 25 cents to take them in for a look at these evil places," says Maxfield, now a pharmacist in Houston. "The whores walked around in little nighties, and they'd come sit on your lap and the kids would go nuts. They were happy to pay the 25 cents for our little tour."

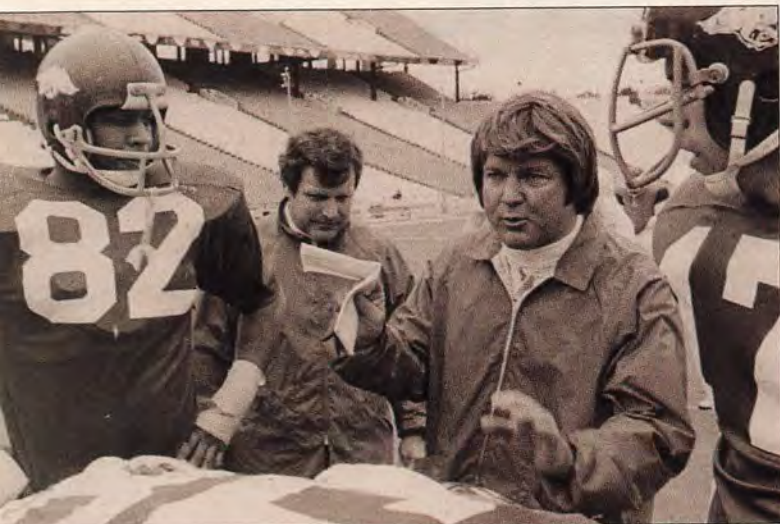
■ **Frustrated as an assistant at Arkansas (left), Johnson got his shot at Oklahoma State.**

The quarters came rolling in for a few weeks, until one night Scar Head and Max were bringing in a tour group and never made it to the front door. Across the street, on the hood of a car sat C.W., who had suspected what they were up to and followed them. C.W. wasn't the kind of daddy to use the belt. Just the sight of him and a word would do. "I just said, 'Let's see how fast you boys can get out of here and get home,'" C.W. says.

Still, C.W. wasn't always so wise to his youngest son's shenanigans. Once when Wayne was nine and Jimmy was six, C.W. caught them smoking in a movie theater. He took them home, gave each one a big cigar "and made us

light 'em up," says Wayne. "Now Jimmy knew how to smoke just as much as I did. But when Jimmy lit his cigar, he started blowing the smoke out the end, rather than drawing on it. Daddy said, 'Aw, Jimmy, you don't even know how to smoke. Wayne put you up to it.' Daddy made me smoke both of 'em, and I got sick. And Jimmy was lying in bed laughing. He knew what he'd done."

Jimmy had his parents fooled into thinking he wasn't a drinker in high school, until the night he forearmed one too many cars.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

could draft Emmitt Smith, the NFL's top rusher in 1991, and Russell Maryland, who became a starter at defensive tackle last season.

In all Johnson has made 44 trades since coming to the Cowboys, mostly wheeling and dealing draft picks to accelerate his rebuilding program. In the 1991 draft the Cowboys had seven picks of their own plus 10 picks acquired in trades with 10 other teams, for a total of 17 players drafted in 12 rounds. Johnson makes those picks pay off by joining his staff in probing college campuses for prospects. Johnson believes he and his coaches, as well as scouts, have to size up a prospect themselves, and when Johnson drafts the player, he turns him over to the assistants so they can do their jobs. "He truly gives responsibility," says Wannstedt, "but he expects results." That goes for practice as well as for games. Wannstedt runs the defense, Norv Turner the offense. Johnson takes in the big picture and the tiniest nuances.

"He was probably one of the most underrated coaches in the country when he was at Miami, but he wasn't there long enough for people to realize how good he was," says Florida State coach Bobby Bowden, whose team lost four times in five games against Miami while Johnson was the Hurricanes' coach. "I called him a



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At the time the forearm was the most feared weapon in high school football in the South, and Jimmy would practice his technique on parked cars. "Jimmy would forearm a car once every couple of weeks, just to keep his hand in," says Maxfield. "I once saw him forearm a '56 Chevy—the model that had the big 'V' under 'Chevrolet' on the trunk—and he forearmed it so hard the 'V' flew off, all the way across the street in the air."

But one night, "for some reason this girl kind of infuriated me," Jimmy recalls. "I'd had too much to drink. I went *foom!* and bashed in her door. She was so upset."

Jimmy went home to bed, but then the girl's father phoned. "When Jimmy came to the phone, he said, 'Hello,' and then 'aaagghh,' like he was going to throw up," says Allene. "That was when I knew he'd been drinking. I just sat down and cried."

Wayne, who hadn't even seen Jimmy earlier that evening, walked in on the commotion. "I said, 'I know the girl. I'll take care of it,'" says Wayne. "And Daddy turned and said, 'Oh, you're the one.'"

"Jimmy had convinced us that Wayne had made him drunk," says C.W.

"I never blamed Wayne," says Jimmy. "I don't lie. They *assumed* it was Wayne's fault, because there were very few times I was ever bad."

"Jimmy was a con artist. Probably still is," says Wayne, without malice. Now a refinery maintenance foreman in Baytown, Texas, Wayne speaks of his little brother with pride.

C.W. doesn't recall exactly what Jimmy's IQ test score was but says that "160 rings a bell." Jimmy made good grades and played his heart out as a guard and linebacker for Buckshot Under-

wood, an old buddy of Bear Bryant's, at Jefferson High. Once, in a game, "Jimmy was running downfield and pointed to his mouth and hollered that he'd got a tooth knocked out," says C.W. "Buckshot hollered back, 'Keep goin'! We'll get you a new one!'"

Maxfield thought Scar Head's speed and strength came naturally, but C.W. says that "all one summer, while he was working for me at the dairy, he wore lead weights around his ankles." Most of the Southwest Conference schools plus Alabama joined the chase for the squat-bodied kid with the shocking quickness and the ferocious forearm. But his parents were Arkansas folks still, and Jimmy went where he knew their hearts were.

■ *Johnson went for a joy ride after Miami clinched the 1987 national championship.*

Jimmy Jumpup On the practice field at Arkansas, a few teammates called Johnson, a 5' 11", 195-pound noseguard, Jimmy Jumpup because "when he'd get knocked down, he'd be up so fast," says Jerry Jones, a Razorback guard who would not forget that trait in Johnson. Jones would go on to become an oil and gas wildcatter, which is as pure a high-stakes gambler as you'll find in business. Nobody plays hunches harder than a wildcatter looking for a lock, a hole card, a secret advantage in searching out oil deposits. Nobody is better at keeping his edge to himself until the right moment. It turned out that Jones was pretty good at it, and he became a multimillionaire by the mid-1970s.

When Jones bought the Cowboys in 1989, he promptly fired Landry and played his hole card by hiring Johnson away from

Miami. And he caught hell from the Texas media for buying a plaything for his old Arkansas roommate to coach. Says Jones, "To think that I would spend \$140-something million—everything I'd ever worked for—and make a decision based on a friendship, is unfair to Jimmy, and it demeans me." What he had done was to keep track of Jimmy Jumpup through the years, the way a big investor tracks a promising little company.

In truth Johnson and Jones were paired in a hotel room on Friday nights before Arkansas road games, but that was about the extent of their rooming together. Both married as undergraduates and lived off campus. And they weren't nearly as chummy as they have been made out to have been. "We haven't done half a dozen things socially since we've known each other," says Johnson, who was a year behind Jones at Arkansas. And neither ever thought the other would wind up in football after

work for Broyles, and there he got knocked down harder than he ever had. In 1976, Broyles decided to retire and "told the staff that he was going to make me head coach," says Johnson. But the last half of the season went badly, and Broyles, who was also the Razorbacks' athletic director, decided he needed a high-profile replacement. He hired Lou Holtz, who had been fired by the New York Jets with one game left in the '76 season.

Johnson was crushed. Jones, who was by then a prominent alumnus, could have lobbied Broyles on Johnson's behalf, but he didn't. Jones wasn't ready to invest in this promising property just yet. (Johnson now says that at age 33 he wasn't ready to be a head coach.) But Jones kept an eye on Johnson, who jumped up again and went to Pitt as Jackie Sherrill's assistant head coach.

Then, three years later, Jones made a personal investment in Johnson. An associate of Jones's in Oklahoma City, Kevin Leonard, was on the Oklahoma State selection committee that was looking for a new coach after the 1978 season. It was not a plum job, because the school was on NCAA probation and was facing additional sanctions pending the result of a new investigation. Moreover, the Oklahoma State coach had to recruit against titanic Oklahoma, then coached by Barry Switzer. The selection committee contacted Grant Teaff of Baylor, Hayden Fry of North Texas State and others, but Jones told Leonard, "The guy you ought to call is Jimmy Johnson."

Johnson took the Oklahoma State job mainly for the prestige that would come with proving himself in the Big Eight. Starting with about 50 scholarship players, as he recalls, because of probation limitations, he solicited walk-ons, patched together a team and won seven games in his first year. "It gave us some credibility," he says. But it wasn't that easy. His next three teams went 4-7, 7-5 and 4-5-2.

By 1983, after Oklahoma State had gone 8-4 and Johnson had signed blue-chip Texas high school running back Thurman Thomas, the program had turned a corner. Also in '83,

Schnellenberger won the national championship at Miami and then left for the ill-fated USFL. The Hurricanes' athletic director, Sam Jankovich, went head-hunting at a coaches' convention and called Johnson aside for advice on some other coaches. Johnson said, "I wouldn't mind living on the beach, Sam."

It was more like hitting the beach. He walked into gale-force hostility from the media and the public, which resented Miami's hiring a country boy from a school that fell short of being a football power. And worse, he met resentment from Schnellenberger's old staff, which he was required to keep for one year. With the coaches divided, Miami went 8-5 in 1984 and lost its last three games notoriously: The Hurricanes led Maryland 31-0 at the half and fell 42-40 when the Terps staged what was then the biggest comeback in NCAA history; next they were beaten



J. MARK KEEGAN/DALLAS MORNING NEWS

college. Johnson, a psychology major, meant to take his people skills into business, as an industrial psychologist.

Johnson became a coach almost by accident. Coach Frank Broyles's Razorback staff often played host to groups of small college and high school coaches in miniclinics. Johnson so thoroughly comprehended the Hogs' defensive scheme—the whole thing, not just the linemen's assignments—that the Arkansas coaches would send him to the chalkboard to lecture. Louisiana Tech's staff was so impressed with him during one such visit that in 1965, when Tech's defensive coach had to sit out a season to recover from a heart attack, they talked Johnson, who graduated that year with a 3.2 average, into taking the post temporarily.

By the end of the 1965 season Johnson was hooked. But then he got knocked flat. In '66, Bill Peterson interviewed him for a job at Florida State, "but at the last minute," says Johnson, "he hired someone else." Jimmy jumped up, loaded Linda Kay and Brent and their belongings into a U-Haul, and went off to Pica-yune, Miss., to take a high school assistant's job. Because he didn't have teaching credentials, he had to monitor study hall. That's how badly he wanted to coach.

From there he plodded the assistant coach's trail from Wichita State to Iowa State to Oklahoma and back to Arkansas to

■ **Jones (right)**
played his hole card
when he hired
Johnson to coach
the Cowboys.

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by Boston College 47-45 on Doug Flutie's famous Hail Mary pass; and finally they lost to UCLA 39-37 in the Fiesta Bowl.

After the season Johnson began to revamp his staff, hiring Wise and, later, Wannstedt, and Miami went 44-4 the next four years. Then the Cowboys came up for sale, and Jones finally played his hole card. "This was heart surgery for me," Jones says of buying the foundering pro team, "and I wanted to find the best heart surgeon." Friendship was a factor in hiring Johnson, but only in that Jones planned to be a hands-on owner. "I knew we could get back-to-back and work together," Jones says.

But mainly, Jones adds, "Jimmy was brought here because he'd been through adverse situations and jumped up and handled them. When we finished our first year together, I knew I'd made the right decision. I saw something during that 1-15 season that I couldn't have seen if we'd gone to the playoffs or walked into a honeymoon in Dallas."

Solitary Man Visitors to Johnson's big house in Valley Ranch have to stay on the balls of their feet, with their knees slightly bent, to keep up with him. His first move is to check on his aquariums. "See that spotted brown one right there?" he says. "He eats a lot of fish. He's going to go hide now. He's shy. That's a marine beta. Here's another anemone, and there's a clown in there. Look at this damn thing hiding in there, 'cause these other tomato clowns will get after his ass." Johnson is partial to the tomato clowns, ferocious little defensive linemen. All-out rushers.

"And over here . . . I put these pencil urchins in here to eat some of these algae. There's some tube worms in here, and he [an anemone] was heading over here, and I didn't want him to eat the tube worms, so I picked him up and put him back over there." Coaching. Always coaching.

■ **Just cuttin' up**
(clockwise from top left): Wayne, Jimmy, Lynda, Allene and C.W.



"And over here . . ." This looks like a designed route to the TV room, and if a visitor breaks in that direction right away, he might be able to cover. Don't buy the shoulder fake; Johnson's just picking up a speck off the spotless floor—"my raisin bran from last night"—because he's a neat freak of the first order. "Have you seen this movie?" asks Johnson. "*Terminator II*?" And there is Arnold Schwarzenegger's head, filling the big screen, and the floor and walls begin reverberating when *Bad to the Bone* pours through the sound system. Johnson is intense, waiting for Schwarzenegger to deliver the big hit. There it is: "Breakin' bones!" Johnson says with a gleeful giggle.

TV timeout! As Schwarzenegger kicks butt on the screen, Johnson settles down a bit. "This is kind of my world," he says. "My world is here, and over there." He gestures toward the Cowboys' complex. Both of his sons live in Dallas, and occasionally they come over. "Last Christmas we stopped by and watched football on TV and ate some ribs," says Chad, a stockbroker.

"Any special occasion we go get about a hundred dollars worth of Tony Roma's," says Brent, a lawyer turned short-story writer, "and everybody eats until they're sick."

Just some grown men kicking back together. "I think we're so much closer now than we had been," says Chad. "It's probably because I'm older now, and he can relate a little easier to me."

"I've had some of the best times with them in the last few years," says Jimmy. "We can do things and talk, and it doesn't have to be fatherly advice. It can be as a friend."

At the time Jimmy came to Dallas, Chad was just graduating from college. "The watershed time" in deciding to get a divorce, says Jimmy, "came when Brent and Chad were responsible for themselves. It was a combination of the boys' having grown, and my going into pro football, and my being to the point in my life that I ought to be able to do what the hell I want to do."

"Coming to Dallas, my mom and my dad were both kind of alone and left with each other, and they discovered that it wasn't what it once was," says Brent. The parting "wasn't traumatic, but it wasn't really easy for Mom. For 26 years she hadn't known anything else. I think she just didn't know what she was going to do. But once she figured it out, she was fine."

Last Memorial Day, on the porch of his cabin at Crystal Beach, Texas, Jimmy is looking out to sea, thinking of Linda Kay. He's drinking a beer, and he's gazing toward the southeast, past the offshore oil rigs on the Gulf of Mexico's horizon, in the direction of Venezuela. "It changed her life-style," he says of the parting. "Mine didn't change. I'm still coaching football. Still coming to the beach. Still drinking beer. Still laughing and cutting up with my family. And her whole life was centered around my job. And that's the thing I feel worst about."

Reached by phone in Caracas, Linda Kay says of her new life, "It's kind of wonderful." She teaches fourth grade at an American school for English-speaking children of well-to-do Venezuelans and foreign dignitaries. Now she travels wherever in the world she pleases. Of Jimmy's world, she says, "I don't miss it. When you're in football, you think everybody is interested. When you're out, you realize the circle is really small. You realize there's a group of people who are just as interested in ballet."

"To this day I care for her a lot," says Jimmy. "But I did what I had to do."

"It just happened," says Linda Kay. "I can't tell you why. Or when. I don't recall a discussion." Any resentment on her part? "Absolutely not," she says. "Never. Not from the beginning."

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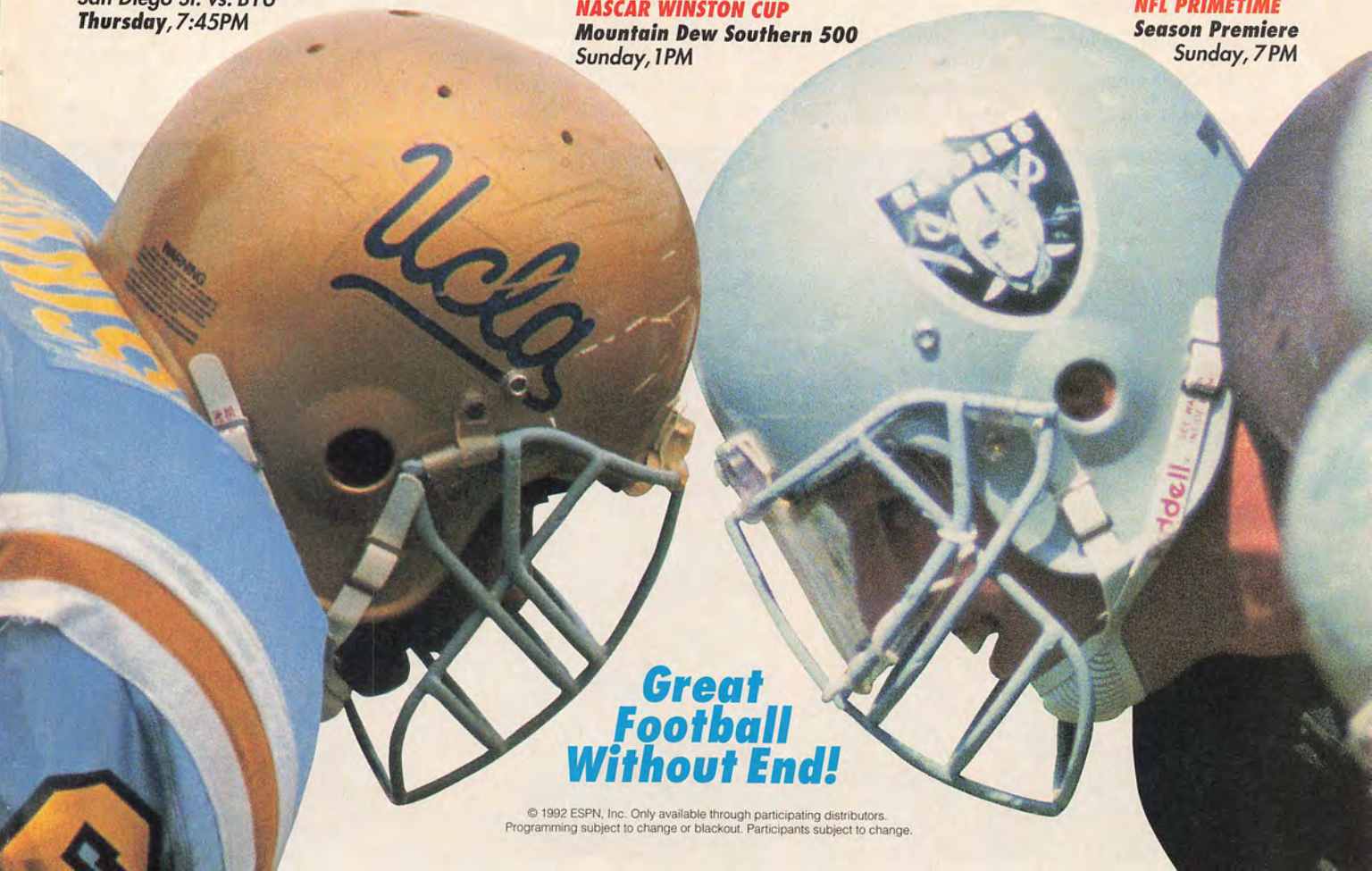
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NFL GAMEDAY

Season Premiere
Sunday, 12 Noon

NFL PRIMETIME

Season Premiere
Sunday, 7 PM



**Great
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Without End!**

Sweet Li'l Ol' Boy Johnson's hair is a mess, whipped every which way by the stiff winds blowing into Uncle Billy Sharp's yard at Crystal Beach. A family party—the Johnsons call get-togethers like this “cuttin’ up”—is well into its third day, but there are still mounds of crayfish, pots of gumbo, pans of boudin and three brands of beer to be consumed. Jimmy is cuttin’ up, telling loud stories, laughing louder, teasing his mama and daddy about how that lil’ ol’ dog of theirs will probably die any day now. C.W. and Allene don’t drink, but otherwise they’re right in the middle of the cuttin’ up. Allene figures the ratio of dog-to-human years and says, “Well, Jimmy, when you get to be 119, you’ll probably teeter and totter a little bit, too.”

“Mama, if I get to be 50, I’m going to be extremely happy,” says Jimmy. “And if I get to be 52 or 53, I’m going to be *ecstatic!*” He chuckles, but nobody else does. They know the strain of his work, know of his drive.

Uncle Billy brings the moment back from the brink of seriousness. “You can’t kill these Johnsons,” he says of his sister’s family. “His bloodline’ll take him to 90 at least. And when they get to be 110 you have to take a 20-pound hammer and beat their liver to death. Then you bury them, and you can still see the ground above them moving.”

Jimmy so rarely comes home to the Gulf shore. Maybe once a year. He never remembers birthdays—“I’m not really sure when Mother and Daddy’s birthdays are,” he admits—and his Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Christmas phone calls might come days after the holiday. He doesn’t send Christmas presents.

■ **With a beer in his hand and Rhonda at his side, Johnson strolls through mid-life bliss.**

Last year, a few days after his mother’s birthday, she found a big box sitting on her porch. “I thought, Oh, Jimmy’s remembered my birthday,” she says. “I opened it, and there were power tools.” Jimmy’s TV show in Dallas was sponsored by a hardware chain, which had given him gift certificates. It

was only a coincidence that he had sent the tools around the time of her birthday. “I called him and thanked him for my ‘birthday present,’” says Allene. “Later, he did send me a present.” She holds out her right hand to show a diamond cluster ring.

“I’ve been surprised out of the blue a lot of times,” says Jimmy’s girlfriend, Rhonda. “I appreciate that more.”

“I want to do what I want to do, when I want to do it,” says Jimmy. Then he takes a serious tone, and he tells the family, “I don’t mean to be the way I am, but there’s some things I got to do.” The others go silent. “And there’ll come a time,” he says, as tears well in younger sister Lynda’s eyes, “when I won’t do ‘em anymore.” It’s a promise to his family to come home for good.

“That’ll be next year,” says Uncle Billy, “when you get to the Super Bowl.”

“I might go lie on the beach in five years,” says Jimmy.

C.W. Johnson thinks back. “We went to a game in Dallas early in his first year,” he says. “Of course, they lost. After the game, Jimmy said, ‘Daddy, I don’t want you to be hurt. But this year I’d rather you and Mother wouldn’t come up here until we start winning. Let me suffer through this alone.’”

“Jimmy,” says his mother, “is just a sweet li’l ol’ boy.” But she knows all about the bad raps. “The week he took the Cowboys’ job, a lady from Dallas called our house. She said, ‘You can just have him back down there in Port Arthur, because we don’t want him in Dallas.’ She said, ‘They’re saying this is going to put Port Arthur on the map. But I want you to know it’s going to wipe Port Arthur clear off the map.’”

Port Arthur is still there. “You oughta see my bust in the library,” says Jimmy. He sips on his beer and then holds his head up in a mock pose. “I got a bust, right there with Janis Joplin.”

“They’ve got a display case,” Rhonda cracks, “with Beat Weeds’ panties in it.”

“Beat Weeds’ panties,” Jimmy scoffs. “She never wore any panties.” And to raised eyebrows all around, he adds, “From what I *understand*.” ■



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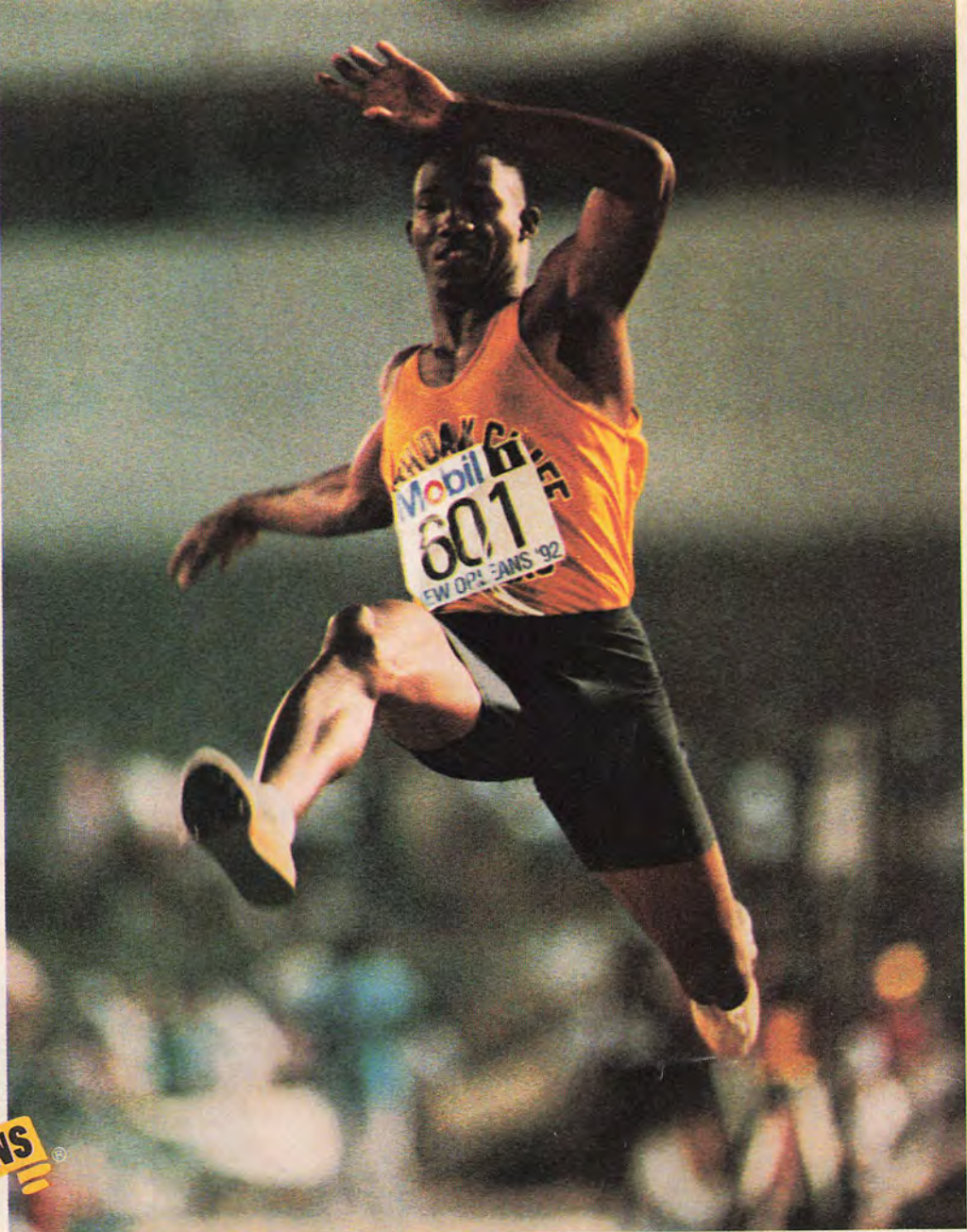
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Sheddrick Fields National Winner, Boys Track & Field

A senior long jumper, Sheddrick brings the national award home to Dallas' South Oak Cliff High. At 6-3 and 180 pounds, Fields' 25-11½ long jump was the nation's best this year. He also posted a wind-aided 26-5½. At the Texas state meet, Sheddrick captured the triple jump and placed second in the long jump—the reverse of his finish at the 1991 meet. Also an outstanding sprinter, Sheddrick runs the second leg of the nation's fastest 4X200-meter relay, and the third fastest 4X100 and 4X400 relays. He recently competed in the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Captain of the Golden Bears' track and football teams, Sheddrick was named all-district defensive back. With his exceptional abilities, he's been recruited in both sports. But what makes him even more special is his strong academic record. Sheddrick has chosen to continue his track career while studying computer programming at the University of Houston.



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Jermaine Lewis, SPR
Greenbelt, MD
Andre Inniss, MID. DIST.
Brooklyn, NY
Corey Ihmels, DIST.
Williston, ND
Delon Gomes, SPR
Providence, RI
Andy Bosley, DIST.
Mequon, WI

STATE WINNERS

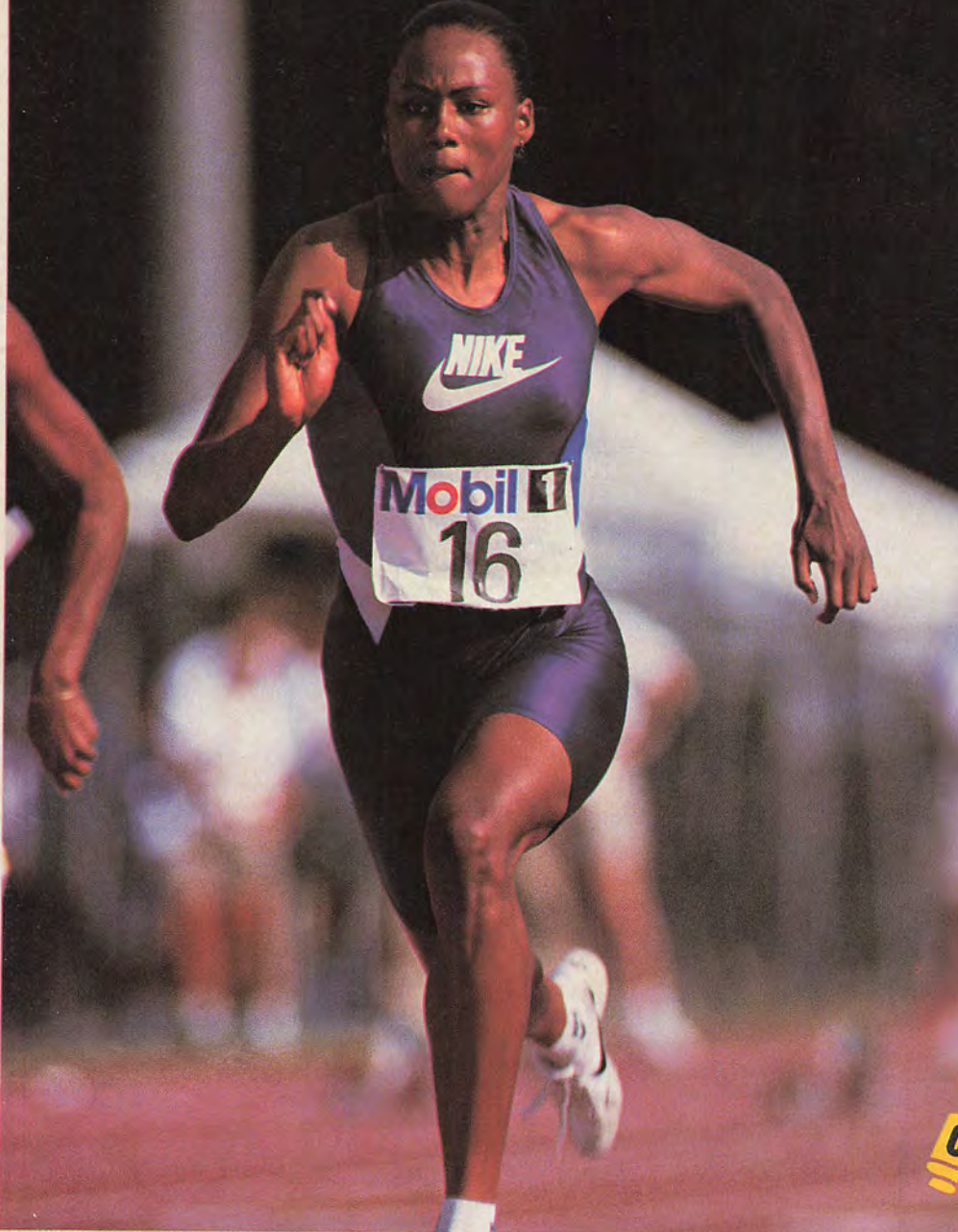
Michael Moran, MID. DIST.
Birmingham, AL
David Dyer, DIST.
Fairbanks, AK
Shannon Sidney, HUR
Russellville, AR

Eric Mack, DIST.
Colorado Springs, CO
Gardner Lewis, SP/DT/TJ/LJ/HJ
Hamden, CT
German Barrios, DIST.
Greenville, DE
Jonathan Ogden, SP/DT
Washington, DC
Gilbert Grantlin, SPR
Belle Glade, FL
Eric O'Brien, DIST.
Atlanta, GA
Cameron Ahana, HUR
Honolulu, HI
Spencer Hill, DIST.
Boise, ID
Kerwin Badie, SPR
Hillside, IL
Greg Allen, SPR
Gary, IN

Tim Dwight, SPR/TJ/LJ
Iowa City, IA
Darby Roberts, JAV/SP/DT
Hill City, KS
Eugene Grundy, HJ/TJ
Bardstow, KY
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Eunice, LA
Joe Bedard, TJ/LJ/HJ/HUR
Rumford, ME
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Bob Ewings, SPR
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Lumberton, MS
Rod Marshall, SPR
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Mark Koelfeld, HJ
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Lionel McPhaul, SPR
Omaha, NE
James Webb, TJ/LJ
Las Vegas, NV
Ben Thurston, SPR
Gilford, NH
Chris Lear, DIST.
Martinsville, NJ
David Krummenacker, MID. DIST.
Las Cruces, NM
Shannon Pope, PV/HUR
High Point, NC
Jeff Hojnacki, MID. DIST.
Solon, OH
Brandon Willis, HUR
Shawnee, OK
Seth Wetzel, MID. DIST.
Portland, OR

Scott Whiteman, MID. DIST.
Fairless Hills, PA
Marc Davis, DIST.
Spartanburg, SC
Justin Hart, SP/DT
Lead, SD
Tony Cosey, MID. DIST.
Knoxville, TN
Robby Duncan, DIST.
South Jordan, UT
Eric Gauthier, PV
Rutland, VT
Lawrence Johnson, PV
Chesapeake, VA
Matthew Davis, DIST.
Spokane, WA
Donald Cunningham, SPR
Charleston, WV
Dusty Carlson, SP/DT
Gillette, WY



Marion Jones National Winner, Girls Track & Field

When Marion Jones won last year's national Gatorade award as a sophomore, she was the first non-senior to do so. Now she has become the first-ever two-time winner. This amazing 5-11 sprinter from California's Thousand Oaks High has set other precedents as well, including a time of 22.58 in the 200-meter dash—a U.S. high school record. Her 11.14 100-meter time tops the nation this year and is the second best all-time high school performance. Only a junior, she finished fourth in the 200 and fifth in the 100 at the U.S. Olympic Trials, narrowly missing a spot on the team.

Despite a broken wrist during the basketball season, Marion is also a key player on that team. During her senior year, Marion is sure to be highly recruited, as she is not only an outstanding all-around athlete, but also holds a very solid academic record.



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Ebony Robinson, SPR
Greenbelt, MD
Stacey Schroeder, SP/DT
Grand Island, NY
Carmen Banks, HUR/SPR
Cleveland, OH
Amy Acuff, HJ
Corpus Christi, TX

STATE WINNERS

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Karin Knudson, DIST.
Anchorage, AK
Atrell Razor, SPR
Forrest City, AR

Angela Fitts, SPR
Littleton, CO
Shelley Talbert, TJ/HJ
Newark, DE
Charlene Green, MID. DIST.
Washington, DC
Danielle Leach, LJ/SPR
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Shea Thurman, SPR
Calhoun, GA
Maria Bergenheim, SPR/MID. DIST.
Kailua, HI
Corissa Yasen, HJ/LJ
Coeur d'Alene, ID
Donna Cargill, SPR
Rockford, IL
Kimberly Shittu, SPR
Gary, IN
Carrie Buckley, JAV/LJ
DeSoto, KS

Shandi Boyd, SPR
Louisville, KY
Holly Forester, DIST.
West Monroe, LA
Erika Doyle, SPR
Cumberland, ME
Tammy Peeples, TJ/LJ/HJ
Weston, MA
Christy Goodison, DIST.
Sterling Heights, MI
Carrie Tollefson, DIST.
Dawson, MN
Comesha Tucker, SPR
McComb, MS
Valeyta Althouse, SP/DT
Blue Springs, MO
Brenda Naber, LJ/HJ/SPR
Havre, MT
Jenny Bramer, LJ/HJ
Omaha, NE

Nicole Martial, TJ/LJ
Las Vegas, NV
Carrie Kimball, SP/DT/JAV
Exeter, NH
Christine Engel, MID. DIST.
Flanders, NJ
Jana Geisler, HJ/HUR
Los Alamos, NM
Ami Herrman, DIST.
Charlotte, NC
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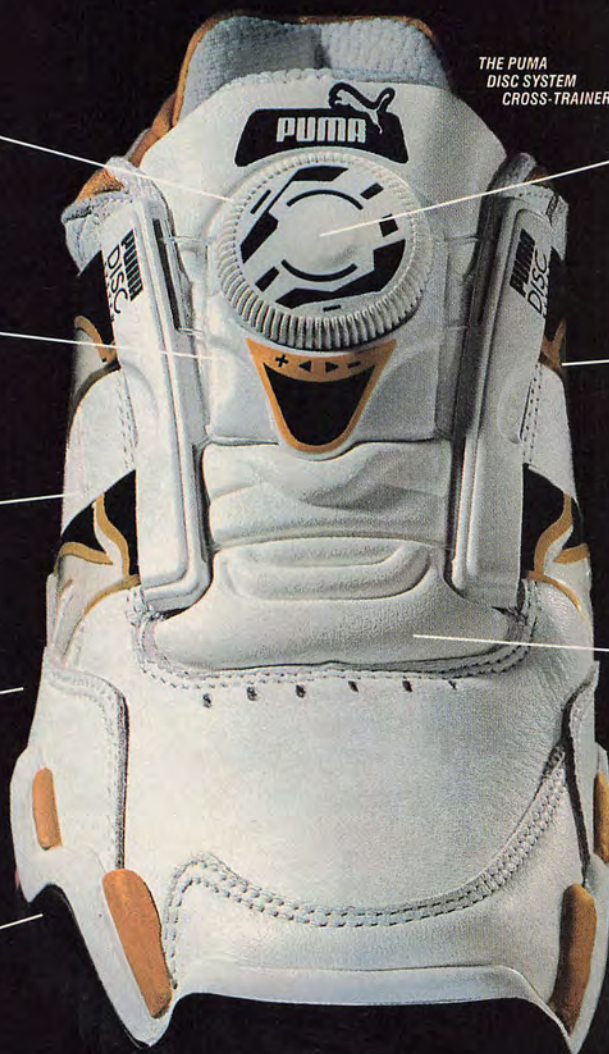
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The Accidental Sailor

Julia Trotman is prone to mishaps on land, but she's a winner on the water

by KELLY WHITESIDE

WELCOME TO MY YACHT," JULIA Trotman said with a smile as she pulled off a green tarpaulin and unveiled what looked more like a bathtub than a racing craft. Most of the 2,000 boats docked in the harbor at Marblehead, Mass., on this late June afternoon bore names such as *Rolls Royce* and *Fortitude*. Trotman's sailboat didn't have a moniker, but it did have a mission. On the back of her boat, scrawled in black marker, was the pledge BARCELONA OR BUST!

This is what you're going to sail in the Olympics? she was asked by a visitor, who pointed to the 11-foot-long, 98-pound dinghy that Trotman had uncovered. This little boat can possibly handle the roiling, flotsam-filled waters off Barcelona? Visions of the *Minnow* lost at sea came to mind. But rest assured that Trotman is no Gilligan at the helm. She climbed into her boat, cast off, raised the 76-square-foot sail and weaved her way through the tightly packed lanes of moored yachts, deftly dodging a boat here and a boat there.

At various points during her 24 years, Trotman's life has seemed like an obstacle course itself—a frightening car crash here, a minor pratfall there. But her indefatigable will carried her through—all the way to Barcelona, where she was the U.S. Olympic yachting team's entry in the Europe dinghy class. Last month Trotman won one race and finished second in another to breeze home with an Olympic bronze medal. If it hadn't been for two premature starts, she would easily have won the gold.

"I didn't anticipate a medal," Trotman said following the final Olympic race in

her typically self-effacing manner. "This was a nice surprise."

A surprise? An American earning a medal in the Europe class was more like a mutiny with a bounty. Though the Europe dinghy has been raced overseas for 25 years, its popularity never crossed the Atlantic. In fact, until recently no manufacturer in the U.S. had even built the boat. But in 1988, the year before Trotman

For the next two years Trotman lived out of a duffel bag. With her Euro dinghy strapped surfboard-style to the roof of her car, she traveled across the U.S. to various regattas, putting 35,000 miles on the odometer. She also racked up a lot of frequent-flier miles, because the best competition in the Europe dinghy was, naturally, in Europe. Though Trotman's wanderings took her to 12 countries, it was hardly a European vacation. Just try checking a 16½-foot mast on an airplane. Trotman also raised about \$25,000 from sponsors and grants to finance her Olympic campaign.

The life of an athlete training for the Olympic yachting team is a far cry from the old-money image of the sport of yachting. "Most sailors buy vans, throw a microwave and refrigerator in the back and travel to events," says Mark Lammens, Trotman's personal coach. "Yachting. That's the worst word ever," says Trotman, "I hope they change it. It has this terrible aura."

Going into the Olympic trials last April, Trotman tried not to dream of Barcelona. "Only one person got to go, so I didn't want to imagine what it would be like, because I didn't want it to be a huge let-down," she says. At one point during the 11-day, 10-race trials, held off Newport Beach, Calif., Lammens caught Trotman filling out an application for a summer journalism program at Harvard. "She wanted to have a backup plan, just in case," he says.

Trotman was not favored to win the trials, and after she finished eighth in the first race, few thought she would be a contender. But others knew better than to



NATHAN BILLOW/ALLSPORT

In Barcelona, Trotman sailed to a bronze in the Europe dinghy class.

graduated from Harvard, the Europe class was selected as the women's single-handed event for the Olympics. The U.S. Sailing Association, scrambling to make up for nearly three lost decades, bought six used dinghies and went looking for sailors to handle them. Trotman, a three-time All-America in sailing, qualified for a boat but turned it down because she had just started a job in New York City as an editorial assistant at *American Heritage* magazine. But the chance to be an Olympian was tough to pass up. In June 1990 she bought a Europe dinghy of her own, quit her job and embarked upon what she calls the life of a nomad.

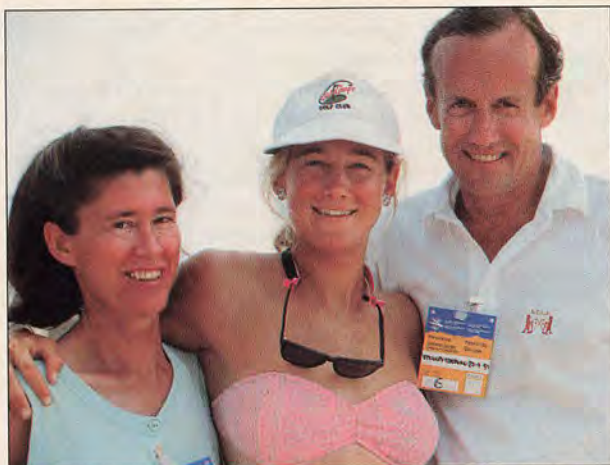
count her out, including her father, Stanley, who says Julia possesses an innate "stick-to-itiveness." Trotman went on to win three races and finish second four times, and after the ninth race was so far ahead she was able to sit out the final one. "I did well because I'm able to sail in a whole variety of conditions," Trotman said afterward. "When you're out there sailing for two hours, it helps to visualize things. When it is windy I hike really hard and imagine myself with legs of steel that would help me hang off the boat forever. In light wind, I think about the words *patience, smooth and calm.*"

Trotman learned about perseverance at an early age. She remembers a rainy afternoon when she was four, riding in the backseat of her mother's beige Oldsmobile station wagon and feeding her year-old brother, Nick, pieces of a bologna-and-cheese sandwich. "I don't remember much more than that. My next memory is of the fireman who yanked me out of the car," she says. "And then the ambulance."

Susie Trotman was driving her two children from the family's home in New York City to her mother's house in Huntington, Long Island, when they came upon a tractor trailer that had jackknifed across the Long Island Expressway. While Susie was able to stop her car in time, the cement truck behind her kept going. "It hit us from behind like a croquet ball, and we went under the tractor trailer and about 30 yards out onto the other side," Susie recalls. "The friction set the car on fire."

In the few terrifying minutes before their rescue, Susie shielded her children from the flames with her hands. An off-duty fireman pulled Julia out of the blazing car, and Susie threw Nick out one of the back windows. Julia suffered lacerations, a broken left leg and a badly burned right hand. Nick had only minor burns. Susie lost most of her fingers. The two children were hospitalized for a few weeks, but Susie spent four months in the hospital and had 25 operations on her

hands. "They may not look like much, but they can do everything," she says. "When they did all those operations on me I told my doctor that I wanted selective skills—hands for tennis and golf, but not for doing the dishes or the laundry," she says, jokingly. Relearning even small tasks took years of patience and a lot of help from her family. "Julia had unusual responsibilities as a child," Susie says. "Not every six-year-old gets ready by herself for



Susie and Stanley were firm supporters to their daughter in Barcelona. Julia (below, right) and brother Nick became old salts at an early age.



school and then has to tie her mother's shoelaces. But she was always a directed child, a focused child, even then."

It has been 20 years since the accident. Susie plays tennis and golf with specially designed rackets and clubs. She can no longer sail as she did before the car crash, so on family boating trips she acts as skipper, bellowing orders to Stanley, an investment banker; Nick, a junior at Tufts and a top college sailor; and Julia. Last October, Susie became the chairman of the training committee for the U.S. Sailing Association.

The family's love of the water was passed on from one generation to the next, from Susie's father to Susie, and then to Julia and Nick. When she was nine, Julia raced in her first regatta in the gentle waters of Cold Spring Harbor, which spill into Long Island Sound. She flirted with other sports, including swimming and tennis, and in high school played field hockey and ice hockey, but she continued to compete in local regattas. At Harvard, in addition to sailing, she was captain of the ice hockey team that won the Ivy League championship three years in a row.

Still, misadventures seemed to follow her. One day during the fall of her freshman year at Harvard, Trotman was riding a bicycle she had borrowed from her mother when her foot slipped on a pedal, and she fell off. She wound up with a stress fracture in her right ankle. Later that winter, in the first ice hockey game of the season, a Yale defenseman pummeled the rookie rightwinger in the corner and fell on Trotman's right leg, shattering the tibia. "The doctor said that it looked like I had been hit by a Mack truck," she says. "My leg had a 30 to 40 percent chance of totally healing."

Then, the week after she qualified for the Olympics, Trotman's parents planned a big party in her honor. Hours before the bash, Trotman borrowed her father's bicycle ("You know, one of those vintage 1960s eight-speeders," she says) to ride to the gym. A car making a right turn cut her off and she smashed into the car's rear fender and crashed to the pavement. "I got back up and started riding home," she says. "It didn't hurt that much. I was just so angry that the driver had done this."

Two hours later Trotman was in the hospital. She had fractured her left shoulder and damaged her rotator cuff. Two hours after that, she was at her party, slumped in a chair with her arm in a sling, being comforted by 120 family members and friends and an ample dose of codeine.

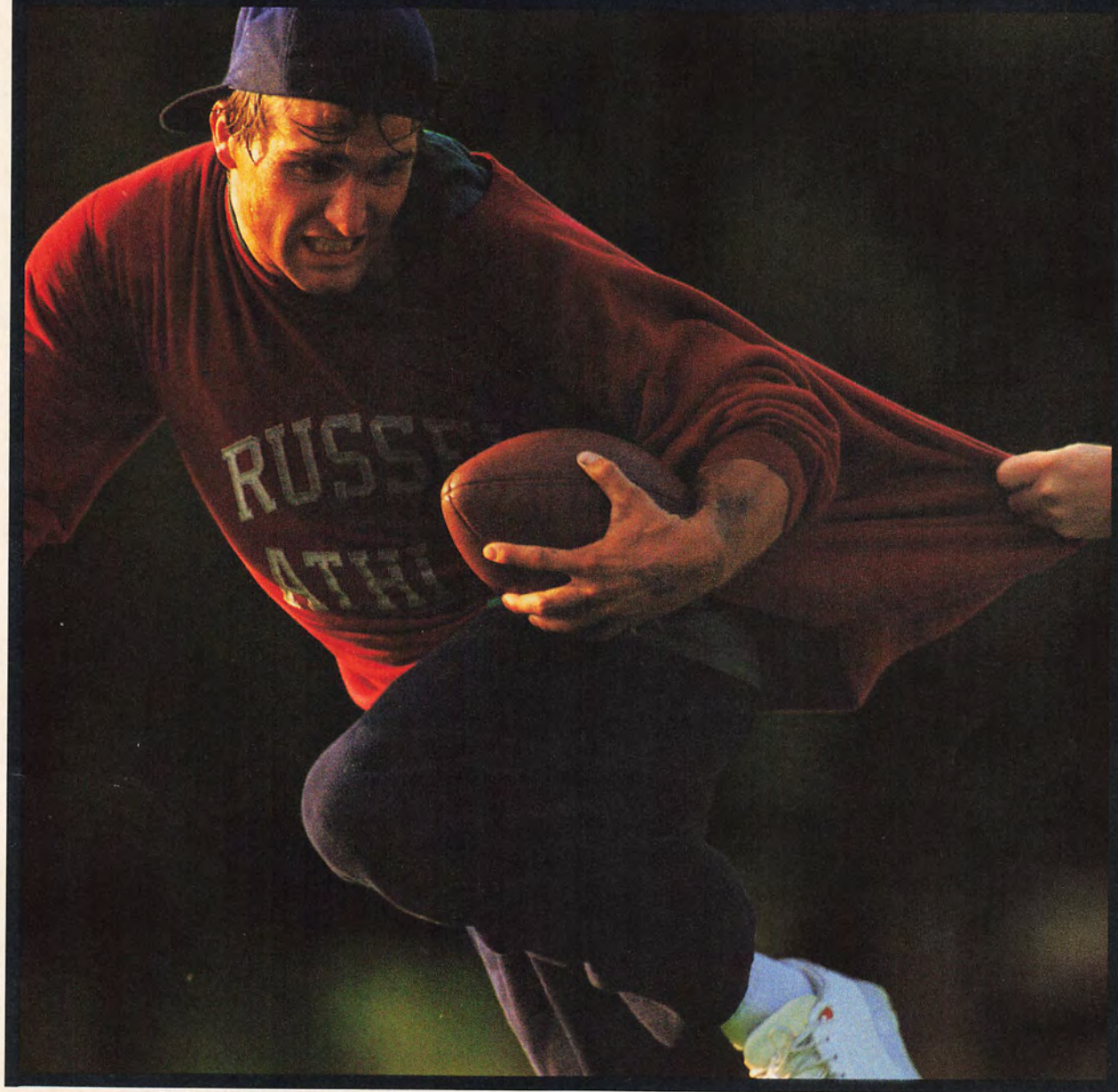
Six weeks later Trotman resumed sailing, and six weeks after that, she was sailing her Europe dinghy in the Mediterranean off Barcelona, where she found smooth sailing at last.

"There's a theme here, I guess," she says with a laugh. "I only seem to hurt myself when I'm on land. I should just stay on water."

NATHAN BLOW/ALLSPORT

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A Sport on the Cutting Edge

For nearly 20 years, Brits have been taking to their

lawn mowers—and racing them | by FRANZ LIDZ

SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN WISBOROUGH Green. September sunlight, contentment. Copies of the *London Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* rustle in the breeze. The smell of freshly cut grass fills the air. Clumps of Brits spread quilts, ground cloths and numerous offspring strategically on this dung-dotted pasture, claiming territory like colonialists dividing a distant continent.

The drowsy languor is shattered by a racket. Smoke and dust billow across the field as dozens of men in crash helmets yank on lawn mower starter ropes. The whine from the Westwoods and the Ransomes and the Qualcasts settles down to a stuttering rhythm, revs up again, then stops completely while five or six men align their mowers between bales of hay.

The union jack is dropped, and with a cry of "Gentlemen, start your mowers!" the 19th Annual World Championships of Lawn Mower Racing is under way.

For the rest of the day, dozens of blade runners bounce around the rutted track in 10-minute heats. Bruised and battered, sleek and stripped for action, the mowers battle head-on for lawn supremacy. The brain-rattling cacophony peaks in the cross-country event—six miles of bumping, thumping chaos.

"The idea is to provide keen, well-organized and inexpensive motor sport in a daft sort of way," says Jim Gavin, general secretary of the British Lawn Mower Racing Association (BLMRA). Sanctioned by Britain's prestigious Royal Automobile

Club, the BLMRA has held mowing events every summer since 1973, including several in France. Membership hovers around 200, depending on who has paid the annual \$9 dues. "We're not attempting to cut grass or set standards for cutting grass," Gavin says. Speed, rather than mowing ability, is the criterion for success.

Britain, of course, is exceedingly conscious of class, and the sport of lawn mower racing has three: run-behinds, sit-be-

hind, and run-behinds. "It's a bloody painful," he explains. Sit-behinds have very little suspension. Sit-upons, none. And run-behinds? "It helps if you're a masochist," says Gavin, who puts out *Cuttings*, the BLMRA's "reasonably regular" newsletter.

"You might want to write this down so



D. ROWLAND/ALLSPORT

hind and sit-upons—the last are the little tractors Gavin calls "the Rolls-Royces of this most English of sports." An amiable Irishman with fine white hair, Gavin has the bluff, ruddy, round-faced ingenuousness of a character actor in a British film about murder in a rectory. "Over here," he says, "competing is more important than winning. And what you compete in is not particularly important."

Mowmen, he says, tend to be rugged individualists. "We don't attract bank clerks or schoolteachers or anyone who works in the civil service," he says. "Our members

It's frightfully true: Races are run under the aegis of the Royal Automobile Club.

that it'll alleviate the whole condition," says Gavin, with the authority of a pharmacist advising an antacid. "The driving force behind mower racing was boredom." One evening in 1973, Gavin and his drinking buddies had been moaning in a West Sussex pub, the Cricketer's Arms in Wisborough Green, about the commercialization of auto racing. A former rally driver, Gavin was hot from officiating the trans-Sahara rally. He gazed wistfully

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around him and saw not sand but green fields.

Someone said, "What about lawn mowers?"

"You're right," said Gavin. "Everyone in Britain has one."

And so the BLMRA was born. But what's an association without a motto. Gavin suggested *Sic biscuitis disintegrat* (roughly, "That's the way the cookie crumbles"). "But it didn't convey the right image," he says. The barflies eventually settled on *Per herbam ad astra* (Through the grass to the stars). "It invoked everything spiritual in lawns," Gavin says.

That night Gavin hung a sign on a wall of the Cricketer's Arms: BRITISH GRAND PRIX FOR LAWN MOWERS IN MURPHY'S FIELD. INQUIRIES HERE. He was back in the pub with the boys the following evening when he heard the now familiar sputter. "I looked out the window and saw a guy running a mower back and forth, full out," Gavin says. "I thought, Holy god! What have we started here?"

The six events at that first grand prix ranged from a mower relay to a three-legged mower race. In the jousting competition, mounted mower knights brandished bamboo poles fitted with boxing gloves. "That went over like a sack of manure," says Ian Saunders, proprietor of the Cricketer's Arms. The tug-of-war was more popular though more perilous. Six machines in tandem tugged from each side. "Unfortunately, the rope stretched across a red-hot cylinder head," Gavin recalls. "Suddenly, boom! The mowers shot out this way and that. Why we didn't kill half the population, I don't know."

The sought-after *prix* were cucumbers. "First place got one cucumber," says Gavin. "Second place, two." Even today the BLMRA offers no cash prizes: Trophies at the '91 world championships included a busted crankcase, an old teapot and a chrome-plated mower blade in a glass case; typically, prizes for this year's tournament (Sept. 19-20) have yet to be determined.

Commercialism is definitely not in the spirit of the sport's regulations. Lawn

mower racers would rather cut grass—which is also never done in competition. For safety's sake, machines are divested of their blades. "I know it sounds ridiculous," says Gavin. "It's like gelding all the colts in the Kentucky Derby."

For a sport in which speeds approach 50 mph, lawn mower racing has an enviable casualty record. The only serious mishap occurred in 1978 when a runaway machine careered into a portable toilet.



Gavin owns four mowers but says racing them would be too painful.

"It frightened the life out of the lady who was in there," says Gavin. "She fled screaming into the night, trailing a kind of blue chemical liquid. It was not a pretty sight." A competitor is now required to wire his body with an ignition cut-off switch; if he's thrown, the engine stops.

Rules are many and strictly enforced. Alterations can be made to the gearing, but the engine can't be tinkered with. And you may enter only machines designed for home lawns. "Not public parks or the rolling foothills of the Canadian prairies or the steppes of Russia," Gavin says with scrupulous and impeccable seriousness.

One or two nonsporting types have tried to infiltrate the sport with souped-

up machines that looked like everyday lawn mowers. One cutup installed a motorcycle engine. He was banned for life. Another tried to juice his mower with methanol. Banned, too. Mutant mowers abounded at a race in Limoges, France, in 1990. One Frenchman cannibalized the bodies of two Citroen 2CVs and bolted a grass catcher to the grill. "We were scared to death that those mammoth French machines would overturn and mow us down," says Gavin. A compromise was reached: The French agreed to race separately in a new class called "super prototypes."

The 12-hour Endurance Classic, also known as Le Lawn, is held in August in Wisborough Green and is the sport's best-known event. Best-known, that is, despite the fact that publicity is pretty much discouraged. Legendary Formula One driver Stirling Moss was allowed into the 1977 classic only if he promised not to tell anyone he would be competing. Lead-footing a Templar Tiller sit-upon, Moss teamed with five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell to capture the title two years running.

The 12-hour has the merry air of a convocation of Druids at Stonehenge. Ungentle pleasures await the 2,000 or so mower buffs in attendance. They bring beach chairs and beach umbrellas and hampers full of comestibles, or they eat burgers and chips from stands set up for Brinsbury Agricultural College's handicapped-

student fund, the charity designated as the primary beneficiary of all this activity.

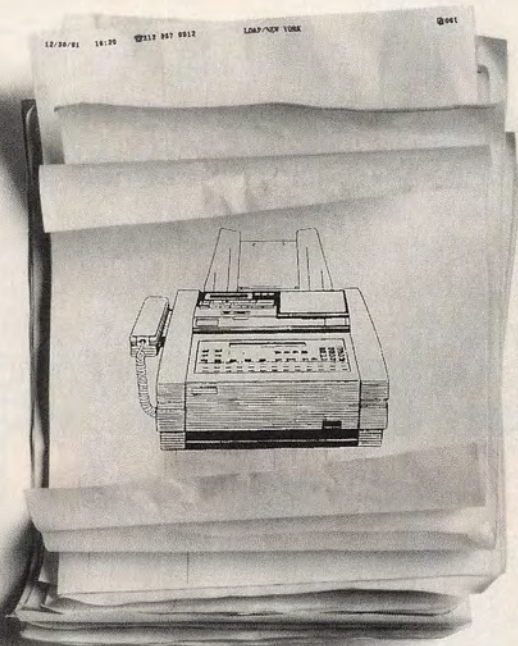
The nightlong gala begins with the customary parade: Scores of mowers—some from as far away as Zimbabwe and Hong Kong—slowly lap the course, headlights blazing. This year the long night ended in a victory for Team Gilliams (the sit-upon class), which beat out the Whipper Snappers, the Weed Killers and the Mayhem Mowers, among others.

"When the 12-hour ends, no spectator, official or competitor wants to see or smell or touch a mower," says Gavin. "Nobody gives a damn what happens to their lawn for the next week."

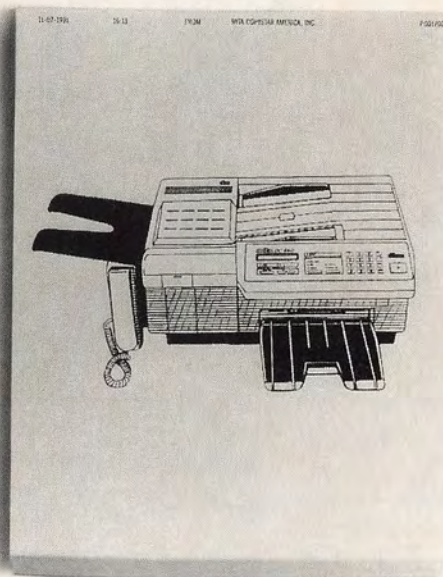
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FOR THE RECORD

Title fight leaves crowd groggy . . .

Thirty-one and counting . . .

Tie-dye makes a big comeback

Bored The crowd at last Saturday night's IBF middleweight title fight in Reno, by champion **James Toney**'s lackluster decision over **Mike McCallum**. It was one of those bouts in which every great moment remains etched in the memory. Let's recount them: referee Joe Cortez stopping the fight three times to replace McCallum's mouthpiece, Cortez stopping the fight twice so that McCallum could have his gloves retaped, Cortez stopping the fight once to penalize McCallum a point for hitting Toney with a hot-dog punch. After that things become really dim. Two of the judges thought Toney won this rematch easily—both gave him the decision by seven points—while the third scored it a draw.

The last time the pair met, in December in Atlantic City, they staged the fight of the year. This one was the fight of the night in Reno, unless there was some scuffle in a cowboy saloon, which would have dropped Toney and McCallum in the ratings. Only rarely did Toney display his trademark fury. After the bell rang to end the 11th round, McCallum hit Toney. Toney spun around, his caged temper about to be released. But when McCallum held up his gloved hand

in apology, Toney merely shrugged and trudged back to his corner. In normal times Cortez would have had to call in the Nevada National Guard to pry Toney off the offender.

How to account for this change of disposition? Toney said before the fight that this would be his last as a middleweight. His off-duty weight is 185 pounds, and it was difficult for him to make the 160-pound limit. Also, after he won the title from Michael Nunn in May 1991, Toney's schedule was grueling. In the 11 months that followed, he had five title defenses. When it was suggested that the 24-year-old Toney may have been drained, Bill Miller, the champion's trainer, did not argue. "I'm going to recommend that James take a long rest," Miller said. "And no more middleweight fights."

After the last punch was thrown, Toney hurried from the Reno-Sparks Convention Center to find his limo missing. "I'm too hungry to wait," he said. Toney and three friends took a taxi to the nearby Clarion Hotel, where pizza, hamburgers and french fries were waiting. The fare came to \$2.70. Toney tossed the cab driver three one-dollar bills. It



RICHARD MACKSON

Toney (left) fought without his trademark fury.

was that kind of night in Reno for just about everybody.

—PAT PUTNAM

Soared To his 31st outdoor world record in the pole vault, **Sergei Bubka** of Ukraine. He cleared 20' 1" at a meet in Padua, Italy, only three weeks after he no-heighted in Barcelona.

Sold As of last week, primarily through the **Grateful Dead**'s phone line (1-800-CAL-DEAD), more than 25,000 copies of the tie-dyed Lithuanian Olympic basketball team T-shirt, complete with a slam-dunking skeleton, at \$30 apiece. The band had donated the original shirts as a gesture of goodwill to the financially strapped Lithuanians, who are receiving part of the proceeds from sales of the copies. "A little thing, a small gesture from the heart, has become a fad," says Dead spokesman Dennis McNally.

EDITED BY STEFANIE SCHEER

Faces in the Crowd



CHERIE DIEZ

Katie Knight-Perry
ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

Knight-Perry, 57, has won 30 consecutive triathlons in the 55- to 59-year-old division since 1990. Her winning streak includes three national championships and two world titles at the international distance.



JOHN TERHUNE

David Palac
HAMTRAMCK, MICH.

David, 15, won the 139-pound Junior Olympic boxing championship by defeating Jason Rios of Greeley, Colo., in the title bout. David was named the outstanding boxer for the five weight classes from 112 to 139 pounds.



DALE SWANSON

Jill Pimley
KLICKITAT, WASH.

Jill, 14, won the youth-division pentathlon at the TAC Junior Olympics by piling up 3,351 points, 346 more than the runner-up, Nicole Thomas, of Carson, Calif. Jill also placed second in the youth high jump with a leap of 5' 3".



GERRY BROOME

Jay Collette
CLEMMONS, N.C.

Collette, 18, swam to five titles at the AAU Junior Olympics. In the 17- to 18-year-old class, he won the 400-meter IM, the 200 backstroke and the 200 butterfly. He also won the 100 back and the 100 fly for 15- to 18-year-olds.



JOHN GRIESHOP

Carolyn Copcutt
MT. HOPE, N.Y.

Carolyn, a junior pitcher at Minisink Valley High, accounted for 24 of the Warriors' 25 wins to lead them to an undefeated season and the Class B state championship. Over a 10-day period, she tossed four no-hitters.



JOHN ROBB

Billy Kumprey
GREENFIELD, WIS.

Kumprey, 20, won two 180.5-pound wrestling titles at the AAU Grand National Tournament. He pinned Brad Stewart of Middleton, Ind., to win the freestyle competition and pinned Wayne Diduck of Canada in Greco-Roman.

INSIDE

Baseball

by TIM KURKJIAN

Center of Attention

Born as he was on Oct. 16, 1969, the day the Amazin' Mets won the World Series, Juan Gonzalez may have been destined for baseball greatness. At 22 he is well on his way. With American League home run leader Mark McGwire stuck at 38 homers because of a rib-cage injury that will keep him out of the A's lineup until at least mid-September, Gonzalez, who plays centerfield for the Rangers, has a good shot at becoming the major league home run leader. Through Sunday he had 37 and was virtually a lock to join Hall of Famers Mel Ott, Joe DiMaggio, Eddie Mathews and Johnny Bench as the only players to hit 40 homers in a season before turning 23.

Gonzalez often hits his homers in pairs. Since July 26 he has had six multihomer games—three more than the whole Twins team has had in that time. As of Sunday he had seven all told this season. (Hank Greenberg's 11 multihomer games in 1938 is the major league record.) Ranger coach Orlando Gomez says Gonzalez's success is due in large part to his learning how to control his temper. "Last year he would strike out, throw a helmet, get mad and give away his next at bat," says Gomez. "He's more mature now. He's learning."

He has a lot more to learn, like running out every ground ball, hustling on every play in the outfield and not trying to pull every pitch for a home run—all topics of complaint against Gonzalez in Texas this

year. "He's an impressive young power hitter, but he has some holes," says Cleveland manager Mike Hargrove. "He can be pitched to."

What makes Gonzalez's power surge more intriguing is the position he plays. Home run hitters in centerfield were once common. In the 1950s New York City had three—Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle and Duke Snider—who regularly hit 40 homers. Others, notably Tony Armas, Fred Lynn, Dale Murphy and Jim Wynn, followed. Last season, however, only three clubs got more than 20 homers from the centerfield position: Oakland, Seattle and Atlanta. This year Gonzalez, Seattle's Ken Griffey Jr. and Baltimore's Mike Devereaux have hit more than 20, but they will probably be the only centerfielders who do.

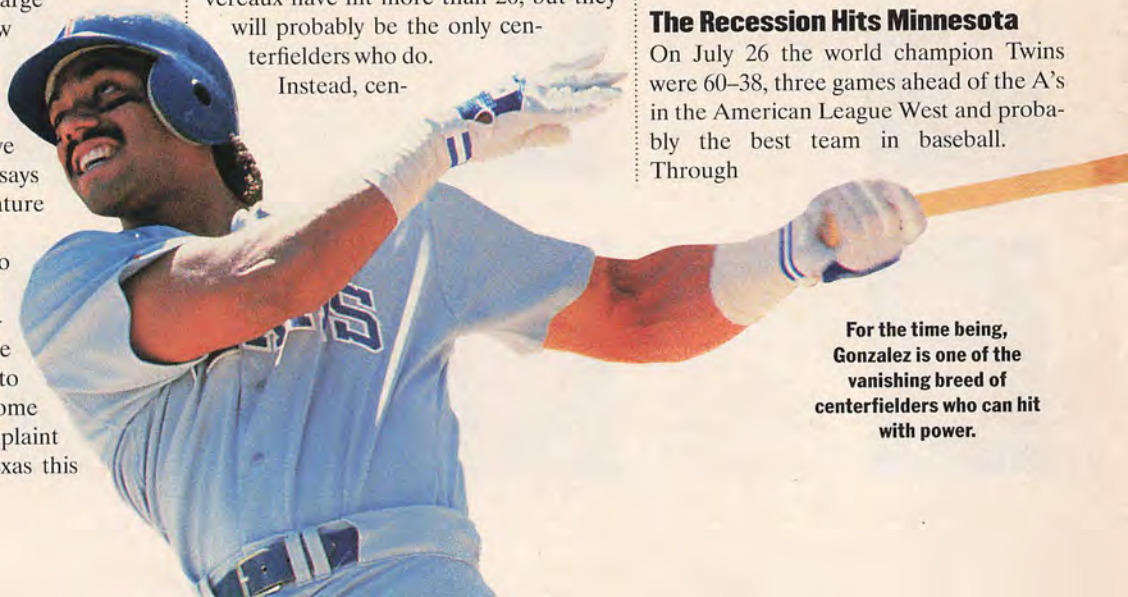
Instead, cen-

terfielders are now patrolled by the likes of Lance Johnson, Kenny Lofton and Brian McRae. "Scatbacks play center now," says Oriole manager John Oates. "Teams get smaller guys who can cover ground." At 6' 3", 215 pounds, Gonzalez is easily the biggest centerfielder in the major leagues. But his days playing center are probably numbered. He has been below average defensively, so don't be surprised if the Rangers move him to left next year and acquire another centerfielder during the off-season. This year could be Gonzalez's last chance to become the first centerfielder to lead his league in homers since Murphy hit 37 for Atlanta in 1985.

The Recession Hits Minnesota

On July 26 the world champion Twins were 60-38, three games ahead of the A's in the American League West and probably the best team in baseball. Through

For the time being, Gonzalez is one of the vanishing breed of centerfielders who can hit with power.





Sunday they were 72-59, 7½ games behind Oakland and almost out of pennant contention. At times they've pitched poorly, and at other times they haven't hit. But, surprisingly, their collapse has been marked by a large number of mental mistakes—the last thing you would expect from a Minnesota team. “We haven't played the game correctly the last month,” says Twin first baseman Kent Hrbek. “We've been sloppy.”

Says manager Tom Kelly, “The first week of this recession—that's what I call it—I think some guys were feeling the pressure. That's when the veterans have to take over. That didn't happen.”

Last week, in the eighth inning of a scoreless game against the Tigers, Detroit had runners at first and third and one out, with Gary Pettis at the plate. Kelly went

to the mound, where he discussed with pitcher John Smiley and the middle in-

fielders what to do in case of a bunt, a hit-and-run or a hard grounder back to the box. During the exceedingly long conference, home plate umpire Al Clark strode to the mound and told Kelly, “Tom, it's August 26”—the inference being that, by this late in the season, the players ought to know what to do. After watching all the mistakes of the previous month, Kelly was taking no chances.

A Wise Old Bird

Should the Orioles emerge as winners in the American League East, remember Aug. 25 as a key date. That was the day that pitcher Rick Sutcliffe gave his teammates a lift with an extraordinary performance. Two days earlier Sutcliffe's mother, Louise Bloss, had died after a long bout with cancer. Rick flew to Kansas City that night to help arrange the funeral

During their slide the Twins sometimes lost their grip on the fundamentals—and the ball.

and planned to return to Baltimore in time to make his scheduled start.

“Stay with your family,” manager John Oates told his pitcher. “I have another starter ready.” But Sutcliffe insisted on going back to take his turn. That night he gave up four hits in eight innings in a 9-1 victory over the Angels. The win was the third in a row for Sutcliffe, whose ERA from Aug. 5 to Aug. 25 was 1.57, while the rest of the Baltimore starters' was 6.01. In the O's 2-0 shutout of Seattle on Sunday, he went 8⅔ innings to get his 14th win.

Sutcliffe, 36, has been an inspiration to Baltimore's young pitchers. But he is one of the guys, too. An example: After a day game in New York in late July, he hired a limo to take himself, Oriole p.r. director Rick Vaughn and trainer Jamie Reed to a Bruce Springsteen concert. During intermission the threesome visited backstage, and after the concert they took the limo, stocked with food and drink, to Boston for Baltimore's next game. Sutcliffe picked up the entire tab.

Short Hop...

Anthony Young's emergence as the Mets' closer (he had 11 saves in 11 tries through Sunday) might make John Franco expendable. But Franco will make \$8 million over the next two years, and that will make him hard to deal. ■

Between The Lines

Follow the Bouncing Ball

When Pirate rookie Tim Wakefield beat the Dodgers' Tom Candiotti 2-0 on Aug. 26, it was the first meeting of two National League knuckleballers since Houston's Joe Niekro beat his brother Phil and the Braves 5-3 on Sept. 13, 1982. “At the end of the game I was a little cross-eyed,” says Pittsburgh catcher Mike LaValliere, who had two hits. “I waved at a few knuckleballs, both offensively and defensively.”

Surprising Cyclist

There has probably never been a more unlikely player to hit for the cycle than Houston shortstop Andujar Cedeno. In 102 at bats with the Astros, Cedeno had hit .186 with only eight extra-base hits before being sent down to the minors June 3. But last week, in his first game after being recalled from Triple A Tucson, Cedeno's triple-homer-double-single night made him the 113th player in National League history to hit for the cycle—something Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Babe Ruth never did in their long careers. Cedeno, 23, is the youngest player to hit for the cycle since Cesar Cedeno (no relation) did it for the Astros in 1972 at age 21.

By the Numbers

• Philadelphia's Darren Daulton has a chance to become the first catcher in history to drive in 100 runs for a last-place team. At week's end he had 91.

Pull the Plug on the Preseason

Does anybody besides insecure NFL coaches and greedy owners see value in this charade? | by RICK TELANDER



RONALD C. MODRA

SO AFTER BEING SUBJECTED TO THE NFL'S TELEVISED preseason dog(s)-and-pony show for six weeks—after seeing fourth-string quarterbacks direct fourth-quarter scoring drives over human speed bumps and listening to future fast-food chefs posing as pro linemen describe the sense of history they felt warming up in Berlin Stadium—I'm thinking: All right! The Vikings against the Jets in the Super Bowl! Like millions of Americans, I find myself wanting to believe that the payoff for having absorbed all this preseason swill is that I know which two teams are the best in the NFL: the 4-0 Minnesota Vikings and the 5-0 New York Jets. Right?

O.K., the San Francisco 49ers also went undefeated through August, but they didn't display enough of those French things favored by true champs—*esprit de corps*, *joie de vivre*, *sangfroid*. The Jets, on the other hand, looked like a flying wedge of brotherhood while crushing their opponents. And the Vikings were so full of unified cold-bloodedness that they outscored the opposition 140-6 in the preseason. Moreover, they spanked the defending Super Bowl champion Washington Redskins 30-0. At RFK Stadium. Minnesota kicker Fuad Reveiz, a frail, unassuming man, even picked up a penalty for delivering a late hit. We're talking about a rookie coach, the Vikings' Dennis Green, whipping together the greatest team in the history of the game. Don't you think?

Or have we been suckered one more time into this con game known as the NFL preseason, wherein a bunch of nobodies run around creating misleading stats, coaches "experiment" with dangerous things like huddle alignment, and stars: 1) hold out; 2) play as little as possible and try not to get injured; 3) play a lot so their coaches can revel in victory; while trying not to get injured; or 4) get injured. And none of it means anything—except the injuries, which, by their steady occurrence, show that the owners still don't understand the simplest of business maxims: Take care of your product.

Maybe the Vikings and the Jets aren't the best teams after all. Last year the Phoenix Cardinals were 4-0 in the preseason; when the games counted, they went 4-12. The Tampa Bay Bucs had the best preseason record (3-1) among NFC Central teams in 1991, and then they walked the plank to a 3-13 finish. The trend has been around for years, which seems to make one thing clear: Coaches with lousy teams can crank it up and win preseason games by playing starters longer, but in so doing they only delay the inevitable. Still, nervous coaches—guys on the contract bubble, first-year saviors—are clearly terrified of losing, even when it doesn't matter. It takes a secure man, like Redskin coach Joe Gibbs, to lose without fretting. It's no accident that rock-solid Washington had a 1-3 record in last year's preseason before going 17-2 during the real deal.

So why have a preseason at all? Tradition says it's to get veterans in shape, check out the newcomers and teach the latest football arcana. But these days vets come to camp in shape, rookies have been scrutinized aplenty in minicamps, and the teaching could have been taken care of in classrooms and walk-throughs.

If the players don't need the preseason, the public surely doesn't need to be tortured with daily reports on the contractual status of stars who are holding out—*players who don't want to be in camp anyway*. These guys don't sign because they realize it's only the stupid, meaningless preseason. And the general managers don't pursue them for the same reason. Jerry Rice makes a deal and joins the 49ers at his leisure. Jim Lachey does the same thing with the Redskins. Are they damaged by missing camp? Hell, no, they're healthy. Erik Howard of the New York Giants missed most of training camp before signing a new contract. In response to a reporter's question about whether he would have trouble picking up the new defensive system, Howard recited a trenchant football axiom: "Nosetackle is still nosetackle."

The real reason for the preseason is greed. The owners force season-ticket holders to buy preseason tickets—you folks should have revolted when you had the chance—and collect TV revenue, but the owners pay the players only a fraction of their regular-season salary. Maybe the owners are being penny-wise and pound-foolish. When Detroit Lion safety Bennie Blades ended his holdout one day after camp broke, he sounded almost radiant when he said that missing the preseason "probably added another year to my career."

How dumb is it to jeopardize your stars' health in preseason games? Very dumb. Ask the San Diego Chargers, who lost starting quarterback John Friesz for the season with a knee injury in the first preseason game this year. Or the Giants, who lost quarterback Jeff Hostetler for a couple of weeks with a back injury. Or the Indianapolis Colts, who lost quarterback Jeff George for four weeks with a stretched thumb ligament.

I have a suggestion: No preseason games. Players report a week or two before the season starts, sign contracts, work out, butt heads, even scrimmage—as long as nothing called a "game" is foisted on the public. If I were running a team, my guys wouldn't have contact with anything but inanimate objects until the opener. A human body has only so many collisions in it; I would save them for important events.

Oh, and before that first game, the short-order cooks and truck drivers trying to make the team would have long since been ushered back into the anonymity whence they came. They would have tried and failed and left. Quietly. Before the action began. Before I turned on my TV.

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